

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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## A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

IN THREE BOOKS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

### BOOK THE SECOND. THE GOLDEN THREAD.

#### CHAPTER XIX. AN OPINION.

WORN out by anxious watching, Mr. Lorry fell asleep at his post. On the tenth morning of his suspense, he was startled by the shining of the sun into the room where a heavy slumber had overtaken him when it was dark night.

He rubbed his eyes and roused himself; but he doubted, when he had done so, whether he was not still asleep. For, going to the door of the Doctor's room and looking in, he perceived that the shoemaker's bench and tools were put aside again, and that the Doctor himself sat reading at the window. He was in his usual morning dress, and his face (which Mr. Lorry could distinctly see), though still very pale, was calmly studious and attentive.

Even when he had satisfied himself that he was awake, Mr. Lorry felt giddily uncertain for some few moments whether the late shoemaking might not be a disturbed dream of his own; for, did not his eyes show him his friend before him in his accustomed clothing and aspect, and employed as usual; and was there any sign within their range, that the change of which he had so strong an impression had actually happened?

It was but the inquiry of his first confusion and astonishment, the answer being obvious. If the impression were not produced by a real corresponding, and sufficient cause, how came he, Jarvis Lorry, there? How came he to have fallen asleep, in his clothes, on the sofa in Doctor Manette's consulting-room, and to be debating these points outside the Doctor's bedroom door in the early morning?

Within a few minutes, Miss Pross stood whispering at his side. If he had had any particle of doubt left, her talk would of necessity have resolved it; but he was by that time clear-headed, and had none. He advised that they should let the time go by until the regular breakfast-hour, and should then meet the Doctor as if nothing unusual had occurred. If he appeared to be in his customary state of mind, Mr. Lorry would then cautiously proceed to seek direction and guidance from the opinion he had been, in his anxiety, so anxious to obtain.

Miss Pross, submitting herself to his judgment, the scheme was worked out with care. Having abundance of time for his usual methodical toilette, Mr. Lorry presented himself at the breakfast-hour in his usual white linen and with his usual neat leg. The Doctor was summoned in the usual way, and came to breakfast.

So far as it was possible to comprehend him without overstepping those delicate and gradual approaches which Mr. Lorry felt to be the only safe advance, he at first supposed that his daughter's marriage had taken place yesterday. An incidental allusion, purposely thrown out, to the day of the week, and the day of the month, set him thinking and counting, and evidently made him uneasy. In all other respects, however, he was so composedly himself, that Mr. Lorry determined to have the aid he sought. And that aid was his own.

Therefore, when the breakfast was done and cleared away, and he and the Doctor were left together, Mr. Lorry said, feelingly:

"My dear Manette, I am anxious to have your opinion, in confidence, on a very curious case in which I am deeply interested; that is to say, it is very curious to me; perhaps, to your better information it may be less so."

Glancing at his hands, which were discoloured by his late work, the Doctor looked troubled, and listened attentively. He had already glanced at his hands more than once.

"Doctor Manette," said Mr. Lorry, touching him affectionately on the arm, "the case is the case of a particularly dear friend of mine. Pray give your mind to it, and advise me well for his sake—and above all, for his daughter's—his daughter's, my dear Manette."

"If I understand," said the Doctor, in a subdued tone, "some mental shock—?"

"Yes!"

"Be explicit," said the Doctor. "Spare no detail."

Mr. Lorry saw that they understood one another, and proceeded.

"My dear Manette, it is the case of an old and a prolonged shock, of great acuteness and severity, to the affections, the feelings, the—the—as you express it—the mind. The mind. It is the case of a shock under which the sufferer was borne down, one cannot say for how long, because I believe he cannot calculate the time himself, and there are no other means of getting

at it. It is the case of a shock from which the sufferer recovered, by a process that he cannot trace himself—as I once heard him publicly relate in a striking manner. It is the case of a shock from which he has recovered, so completely, as to be a highly intelligent man, capable of close application of mind, and great exertion of body, and of constantly making fresh additions to his stock of knowledge, which was already very large. But, unfortunately, there has been," he paused and took a deep breath—"a slight relapse."

The Doctor, in a low voice, asked, "Of how long duration?"

"Nine days and nights."

"How did it show itself? I infer," glancing at his hands again, "in the resumption of some old pursuit connected with the shock?"

"That is the fact."

"Now, did you ever see him," asked the Doctor, distinctly and collectedly, though in the same low voice, "engaged in that pursuit originally?"

"Once."

"And when the relapse fell on him, was he in most respects—or in all respects—as he was then?"

"I think, in all respects."

"You spoke of his daughter. Does his daughter know of the relapse?"

"No. It has been kept from her, and I hope will always be kept from her. It is known only to myself, and to one other who may be trusted."

The Doctor grasped his hand, and murmured, "That was very kind. That was very thoughtful!" Mr. Lorry grasped his hand in return, and neither of the two spoke for a little while.

"Now, my dear Manette," said Mr. Lorry, at length, in his most considerate and most affectionate way, "I am a mere man of business, and unfit to cope with such intricate and difficult matters. I do not possess the kind of information necessary; I do not possess the kind of intelligence; I want guiding. There is no man in this world on whom I could so rely for right guidance, as on you. Tell me, how does this relapse come about? Is there danger of another? Could a repetition of it be prevented? How should a repetition of it be treated? How does it come about at all? What can I do for my friend? No man ever can have been more desirous in his heart to serve a friend, than I am to serve mine, if I knew how. But I don't know how to originate, in such a case. If your sagacity, knowledge, and experience, could put me on the right track, I might be able to do so much; unenlightened and undirected, I can do so little. Pray discuss it with me; pray enable me to see it a little more clearly, and teach me how to be a little more useful."

Doctor Manette sat meditating after these earnest words were spoken, and Mr. Lorry did not press him.

"I think it probable," said the Doctor, breaking silence with an effort, "that the relapse you have described, my dear friend, was not quite unforeseen by its subject."

"Was it dreaded by him?" Mr. Lorry ventured to ask.

"Very much." He said it with an involuntary shudder. "You have no idea how such an apprehension weighs on the sufferer's mind, and how difficult—how almost impossible—it is, for him to force himself to utter a word upon the topic that oppresses him."

"Would he," asked Mr. Lorry, "be sensibly relieved if he could prevail upon himself to impart that secret brooding to any one, when it is on him?"

"I think so. But it is, as I have told you, next to impossible. I even believe it—in some cases—to be quite impossible."

"Now," said Mr. Lorry, gently laying his hand on the Doctor's arm again, after a short silence on both sides, "to what would you refer this attack?"

"I believe," returned Doctor Manette, "that there had been a strong and extraordinary revival of the train of thought and remembrance that was the first cause of the malady. Some intense associations of a most distressing nature were vividly recalled, I think. It is probable that there had long been a dread lurking in his mind, that those associations would be recalled—say, under certain circumstances—say, on a particular occasion. He tried to prepare himself, in vain; perhaps the effort to prepare himself, made him less able to bear it."

"Would he remember what took place in the relapse?" asked Mr. Lorry, with natural hesitation.

The Doctor looked desolately round the room, shook his head, and answered, in a low voice, "Not at all."

"Now, as to the future," hinted Mr. Lorry.

"As to the future," said the Doctor, recovering firmness, "I should have great hope. As it pleased Heaven in its mercy to restore him so soon, I should have great hope. He, yielding under the pressure of a complicated something, long dreaded and long vaguely foreseen and contended against, and recovering after the cloud had burst and passed, I should hope that the worst was over."

"Well, well! That's good comfort. I am thankful!" said Mr. Lorry.

"I am thankful!" repeated the Doctor, bending his head with reverence.

"There are two other points," said Mr. Lorry, "on which I am anxious to be instructed. I may go on?"

"You cannot do your friend a better service." The Doctor gave him his hand.

"To the first, then. He is of a studious habit, and unusually energetic; he applies himself with great ardour to the acquisition of professional knowledge, to the conducting of experiments, to many things. Now, does he do too much?"

"I think not. It may be the character of his mind, to be always in singular need of occupation. That may be, in part, natural to it; in part, the result of affliction. The less it was occupied with healthy things, the more it would

be in danger of turning in the unhealthy direction. He may have observed himself, and made the discovery."

"You are sure that he is not under too great a strain?"

"I think I am quite sure of it."

"My dear Manette, if he were overworked now—"

"My dear Lorry, I doubt if that could easily be. There has been a violent stress in one direction, and it needs a counterweight."

"Excuse me, as a persistent man of business. Assuming for a moment, that he *was* overworked; it would show itself in some renewal of this disorder?"

"I do not think so. I do not think," said Doctor Manette with the firmness of self-conviction, "that anything but the one train of association would renew it. I think that, henceforth, nothing but some extraordinary jarring of that chord could renew it. After what has happened, and after his recovery, I find it difficult to imagine any such violent sounding of that string again. I trust, and I almost believe, that the circumstances likely to renew it are exhausted."

He spoke with the diffidence of a man who knew how slight a thing would upset the delicate organisation of the mind, and yet with the confidence of a man who had slowly won his assurance out of personal endurance and distress. It was not for his friend to abate that confidence. He professed himself more relieved and encouraged than he really was, and approached his second and last point. He felt it to be the most difficult of all; but, remembering his old Sunday morning conversation with Miss Pross, and remembering what he had seen in the last nine days, he knew that he must face it.

"The occupation resumed under the influence of this passing affliction so happily recovered from," said Mr. Lorry, clearing his throat, "we will call—Blacksmith's work. Blacksmith's work. We will say, to put a case and for the sake of illustration, that he had been used in his bad time, to work at a little forge. We will say that he was unexpectedly found at his forge again. Is it not a pity that he should keep it by him?"

The Doctor shaded his forehead with his hand, and beat his foot nervously on the ground.

"He has always kept it by him," said Mr. Lorry, with an anxious look at his friend. "Now, would it not be better that he should let it go?"

Still, the Doctor, with shaded forehead, beat his foot nervously on the ground.

"You do not find it easy to advise me?" said Mr. Lorry. "I quite understand it to be a nice question. And yet I think—" And there he shook his head, and stopped.

"You see," said Doctor Manette, turning to him after an uneasy pause, "it is very hard to explain, consistently, the innermost workings of this poor man's mind. He once yearned so frightfully for that occupation, and it was so welcome when it came; no doubt it relieved his

pain so much, by substituting the perplexity of the fingers for the perplexity of the brain, and by substituting, as he became more practised, the ingenuity of the hands for the ingenuity of the mental torture; that he has never been able to bear the thought of putting it quite out of his reach. Even now, when, I believe, he is more hopeful of himself than he has ever been, and even speaks of himself with a kind of confidence, the idea that he might need that old employment, and not find it, gives him a sudden sense of terror, like that which one may fancy strikes to the heart of a lost child."

He looked like his illustration, as he raised his eyes to Mr. Lorry's face.

"But may not—mind! I ask for information, as a plodding man of business who only deals with such material objects as guineas, shillings, and bank-notes—may not the retention of the thing, involve the retention of the idea? If the thing were gone, my dear Manette, might not the fear go with it? In short, is it not a concession to the misgiving, to keep the forge?"

There was another silence.

"You see, too," said the Doctor, tremulously, "it is such an old companion."

"I would not keep it," said Mr. Lorry, shaking his head; for he gained in firmness as he saw the Doctor disquieted. "I would recommend him to sacrifice it. I only want your authority. I am sure it does no good. Come! Give me your authority, like a dear good man. For his daughter's sake, my dear Manette!"

Very strange to see what a struggle there was within him!

"In her name, then, let it be done; I sanction it. But, I would not take it away while he was present. Let it be removed when he is not there; let him miss his old companion after an absence."

Mr. Lorry readily engaged for that, and the conference was ended. They passed the day in the country, and the Doctor was quite restored. On the three following days, he remained perfectly well, and on the fourteenth day, he went away to join Lucie and her husband. The precaution that had been taken to account for his silence, Mr. Lorry had previously explained to him, and he had written to Lucie in accordance with it, and she had no suspicions.

On the night of the day on which he left the house, Mr. Lorry went into his room with a chopper, saw, chisel, and hammer, attended by Miss Pross carrying a light. There, with closed doors, and in a mysterious and guilty manner, Mr. Lorry hacked the shoemaker's bench to pieces, while Miss Pross held the candle as if she were assisting at a murder—for which, indeed, in her grimness, she was no unsuitable figure. The burning of the body (previously reduced to pieces convenient for the purpose), was commenced without delay in the kitchen fire; and the tools, shoes, and leather, were buried in the garden. So wicked do destruction and secrecy appear to honest minds, that Mr. Lorry and Miss Pross, while engaged in the commission of their deed and in the removal of its traces, almost

felt, and almost looked, like accomplices in a horrible crime.

#### CHAPTER XX. A PLEA.

WHEN the newly-married pair came home, the first person who appeared, to offer his congratulations, was Sydney Carton. They had not been at home many hours, when he presented himself. He was not improved in habits, or in looks, or in manner; but, there was a certain rugged air of fidelity about him, which was new to the observation of Charles Darnay.

He watched his opportunity of taking Darnay aside into a window, and of speaking to him when no one overheard.

"Mr. Darnay," said Carton, "I wish we might be friends."

"We are already friends, I hope."

"You are good enough to say so, as a fashion of speech; but, I don't mean any fashion of speech. Indeed, when I say I wish we might be friends, I scarcely mean quite that, either."

Charles Darnay—as was natural—asked him, in all good-humour and good-fellowship, what he did mean?

"Upon my life," said Carton, smiling, "I find that easier to comprehend in my own mind, than to convey to yours. However, let me try. You remember a certain famous occasion when I was more drunk than—than usual?"

"I remember a certain famous occasion when you forced me to confess that you had been drinking."

"I remember it too. The curse of those occasions is heavy upon me, for I always remember them. I hope it may be taken into account one day, when all days are at an end for me!—Don't be alarmed; I am not going to preach."

"I am not at all alarmed. Earnestness in you, is anything but alarming to me."

"Ah!" said Carton, with a careless wave of his hand, as if he waved that away. "On the drunken occasion in question (one of a large number, as you know), I was insufferable about liking you, and not liking you. I wish you would forget it."

"I forgot it long ago."

"Fashion of speech again! But, Mr. Darnay, oblivion is not so easy to me, as you represent it to be to you. I have by no means forgotten it, and a light answer does not help me to forget it."

"If it was a light answer," returned Darnay, "I beg your forgiveness for it. I had no other object than to turn a slight thing, which, to my surprise, seems to trouble you too much, aside. I declare to you, on the faith of a gentleman, that I have long dismissed it from my mind. Good Heaven, what was there to dismiss! Have I had nothing more important to remember, in the great service you rendered me that day?"

"As to the great service," said Carton, "I am bound to avow to you, when you speak of it in that way, that it was mere professional claptrap. I don't know that I cared what became

of you, when I rendered it.—Mind! I say when I rendered it; I am speaking of the past."

"You make light of the obligation," returned Darnay, "but I will not quarrel with *your* light answer."

"Genuine truth, Mr. Darnay, trust me! I have gone aside from my purpose; I was speaking about our being friends. Now, you know me; you know I am incapable of all the higher and better flights of men. If you doubt it, ask Stryver, and he'll tell you so."

"I prefer to form my own opinion, without the aid of his."

"Well! At any rate you know me as a dis-solute dog, who has never done any good, and never will."

"I don't know that you 'never will.'"

"But I do, and you must take my word for it. Well! If you could endure to have such a worthless fellow, and a fellow of such indifferent reputation, coming and going at odd times, I should ask that I might be permitted to come and go as a privileged person here; that I might be regarded as an useless (and I would add, if it were not for the resemblance I detected between you and me, an unornamental) piece of furniture, tolerated for its old service and taken no notice of. I doubt if I should abuse the permission. It is a hundred to one if I should avail myself of it four times in a year. It would satisfy me, I dare say, to know that I had it."

"Will you try?"

"That is another way of saying that I am placed on the footing I have indicated. I thank you, Darnay. I may use that freedom with your name?"

"I think so, Carton, by this time."

They shook hands upon it, and Sydney turned away. Within a minute afterwards, he was, to all outward appearance, as unsubstantial as ever.

When he was gone, and in the course of an evening passed with Miss Pross, the Doctor, and Mr. Lorry, Charles Darnay made some mention of this conversation in general terms, and spoke of Sydney Carton as a problem of carelessness and recklessness. He spoke of him, in short, not bitterly or meaning to bear hard upon him, but as anybody might who saw him as he showed himself.

He had no idea that this could dwell in the thoughts of his fair young wife; but, when he afterwards joined her in their own rooms, he found her waiting for him with the old pretty lifting of the forehead strongly marked.

"We are thoughtful to-night!" said Darnay, drawing his arm about her.

"Yes, dearest Charles," with her hands on his breast, and the inquiring and attentive expression fixed upon him; "we are rather thoughtful to-night, for we have something on our mind to-night."

"What is it, my Lucie?"

"Will you promise not to press one question on me, if I beg you not to ask it?"

"Will I promise? What will I not promise to my Love?"



What, indeed, with his hand putting aside the golden hair from the cheek, and his other hand against the heart that beat for him!

"I think, Charles, poor Mr. Carton deserves more consideration and respect than you expressed for him to-night."

"Indeed, my own? Why so?"

"That is what you are not to ask me. But I think—I know—he does."

"If you know it, it is enough. What would you have me do, my Life?"

"I would ask you, dearest, to be very generous with him always, and very lenient on his faults when he is not by. I would ask you to believe that he has a heart he very, very, seldom reveals, and that there are deep wounds in it. My dear, I have seen it bleeding."

"It is a painful reflection to me," said Charles Darnay, quite astounded, "that I should have done him any wrong. I never thought this of him."

"My husband, it is so. I fear he is not to be reclaimed; there is scarcely a hope that anything in his character or fortunes is reparable now. But, I am sure that he is capable of good things, gentle things, even magnanimous things."

She looked so beautiful, in the purity of her faith in this lost man, that her husband could have looked at her as she was, for hours.

"And, O my dearest Love!" she urged, clinging nearer to him, laying her head upon his breast, and raising her eyes to his, "remember how strong we are in our happiness, and how weak he is in his misery!"

The supplication touched him home. "I will always remember it, dear Heart! I will remember it as long as I live."

He bent over the golden head, and put the rosy lips to his, and folded her in his arms. If one forlorn wanderer then pacing the dark streets, could have heard her innocent disclosure, and could have seen the drops of pity kissed away by her husband from the soft blue eyes so loving of that husband, he might have cried to the night—and the words would not have parted from his lips for the first time—

"God bless her for her sweet compassion!"

### SHIPS AND CREWS.

#### WHAT is the Naval Question?

It comprises all sorts of inquiries in one, and that one is really this: Can Great Britain be, at sea, in these days, what she was in old days? Make that all clear, and your work is done. She can, on one condition—that no energy nor expense be spared in carrying out the object. No one can reasonably doubt this, whatsoever views he may bring to the consideration of the question, and with whatsoever preconceived opinions he may have ascertained all about our Position and Policy from the excellent work of "A Naval Peer" from the book by Mr. Hans Busk, or from other recent authorities.

How Britain came to be such a maritime power

as she has been and is? It is not an affair of race only, nor of insular position only; but of these two fundamental things working upon each other, and both worked upon by our political history. Some will tell you that commerce created our marine; but what created our commerce? and how long would our commerce have lasted if we had not been able to protect it by force? Originally, of course, it must have been something in our blood that fitted us for the sea; but this would not have produced our greatness alone. The Saxons seem never to have kept a navy till the Danes forced it upon them. The Norman invasion was unopposed in the Channel, but it led to the Cinque Ports being established, and to a constant communication between England and Normandy very favourable to nautical progress. The Plantagenet wars with France had the same effect; and, in those days, we were as victorious at sea as in later times. Now it is worth notice that what we call seamanship has changed its character quite as much as other things, and that if steam is one change more, we ought to remember the consoling as well as the alarming side of the fact. Steam, they tell us, is an affair of science. Very true. But so was it an affair of science when the old rough hand-to-hand fighting, between huge galleys, was exchanged for the evolutions of squadrons under Blake and Nelson. It was a French Jesuit—L'Hoste—who was one of the earliest and best writers on naval tactics. But we, too, became masters in the tactics, and why not now in the new tactics?

It is steam war versus old war that makes the great feature of the new generation, and undoubtedly deserves the most careful inquiry. Still, let us remember that success in war depends at bottom on moral and physical superiority, and that the conditions under which this is exercised, though of great, are only of secondary importance.

Certainly the rapidity of the change is a conspicuous feature in it. So late as fifteen or twenty years ago, there was not a screw liner known, and the steamers were all paddle steamers. Our ideal of a line-of-battle ship was one of Sir William Symonds's vessels built for sailing, and beautiful to behold. Now, there are not much above a dozen effective sailing liners in the navy, and they are chiefly used as guard and receiving ships. The best are converted into screws; all new liners are built for screws; and, when a great battle comes, it will be fought with screws. This Spring, England and France had some thirty-five of them aloft each, and both are still building steadily.

"Steam"—this is the regular saying—"has bridged the Channel." The exact amount of truth here is, that it has made it easier to bridge. But there are the piles and piers to lay down, and our fleet must be disposed of before that is possible. All talk of invasion is based on the supposition that the Channel is cleared of our squadrons before the army is brought across. That secured, steam has shortened the

time necessary for the transit, and there is sufficient fine weather in the course of every summer to make a satisfactory passage possible.

It is plain that, under these circumstances, everything will depend on the old story of the "command of the Channel." If Englishmen and Frenchmen are relatively what they were, and have taken equal pains with the new work, the Englishman ought to beat. Twenty screw liners under the union jack ought to beat the same or a greater number under the tricolor. But—seamanship? Well, the same kind of seamanship will not be employed, that is, in perfectly fine weather and smooth water, and going into action with masts bare. But even under these circumstances (the most favourable to the French) there will be fleet-manceuvring necessary, an eye for combinations, a general readiness in clearing wreck and other obstructions for action, and in action, in which we ought to have the superiority. Of course, too, many accidents may occur; such as a fouled screw, to meet the consequences of which requires the old seamanlike qualities. And, when it comes to making sail, and working under sail, whatever advantages we ever had, ought still to be on our side. Assuming, in fact, a perfect equality of conditions between two squadrons, why should the new seamanship give us less advantage than the old? It was once new, and we had to learn it, and we did so successfully. All that is wanted is that we shall learn, as Sir Howard Douglas enforces upon us, and not content ourselves with thinking that there is some mystic quality in our blood which will enable us to do miracles upon salt water more than anywhere else. This last notion is loudly maintained by many British amateurs, whose stomachs indignantly revolt against it by the time they get outside the Nore.

Assuming, then, that a perfect British screw fleet will defeat a ditto of any other nation, the next question is, how we have been accommodating ourselves to those changes which alone could bring such an assumption into a moment's doubt? Good dockyards, good ships, good men, and good discipline—these are the necessities for a sovereign of the seas.

If we wanted a proof of the French zeal in naval matters (and there are a score forthcoming from any inquirer at once), it would be afforded by the familiar instance of Cherbourg. There we have, or rather they have, a kind of model modern dockyard, free from the faults of old ones, and rich in all that ought to be found in the new. It is much nearer to us than older French arsenals, is built in the smoothest part of the Channel, and on a scale suited to the most formidable preparations. Take Portsmouth and Plymouth dockyards, and you find that there is a great deal of time lost in consequence of the departments being separate from each other; whereas rigging, arming, and victualling all go on at Cherbourg within the same walls. In our ports above named, boats, lighters, buoys, keep endlessly moving through the yellow water (at

the risk of wetting and otherwise damaging goods); while, in Cherbourg, everything is put on board from the wharfs, alongside which the ship lies. And so, of course, with coaling. Coal must be hoisted out of a ship's hold, and thus taken on board—a tedious process, "hateful to the seamen," as The Naval Peer justly observes, instead of being moved from the quays by machinery, as in the Norman port. Again, the Cherbourg authorities don't "hulk" their seamen as we do in narrow, dirty, old-fashioned hulks; but march them aboard comfortably, from a kind of naval barracks. Surely all these are sensible business arrangements vastly superior to our old happy-go-lucky way of managing matters; and ought to teach us to mend it. Dockyards are the "positions" on which fleets retreat for refreshment and repair; and rapidity in, and convenience for, refitting a fleet would be half the battle in war time. That the French are eminently business-like in their way of doing work was shown at Genoa in the late war.

This general superiority, of sizes and of arrangements about Cherbourg, and its nearness (only fifty-two miles) to our coast, makes Cherbourg an ugly neighbour. Blockade it, you will say, as Collingwood did Toulon, so persistently. Nobody supposes that such traditions will not be honestly acted on by our service. But blockades have been evaded before; and a steam fleet, running twelve miles an hour, would not be so easy to catch if once a feint had drawn the blockading force from before its prison. Observe, too, as an instance of the organisation of Cherbourg, that French ships can enter Cherbourg docks at all times of high water, and that our ships can only enter those of Portsmouth and Plymouth during spring tides.

The fortification of our dockyards and arsenals involve a military question. But it is not denied that Cherbourg is very strong from that point of view, nor that the improvements which have been going on at Portsmouth of late years still fall short of what is wanted.

Turn now to the question of ships. It is a curious fact, illustrative of the excellent character of our seamen, that we English have never been so superior in ship-building as some among us seem to fancy. We imitated the Dutch, before beating them, in the seventeenth century, and we captured from the French, before beating them, in the eighteenth century. Some of our finest vessels were prizes during the last war, and inflicted deadly injury on the nation that had produced them. Nelson's exclamation, "Thank God, the Spaniards cannot build men!" is well known. So that the mere fact of the French having fine vessels is not one which ought to alarm or astonish us by itself. When a late wit, who had once been a sailor, heard that the French were building steamers rapidly, he said, "Glad of it—we want a few more!"

But, suppose the French *have* been building on a scale which alters the old proportions of force between the two countries in this depart-

ment? We are a naval power, before all and above all: a power that has its roots in the sea, like a water-plant. The sea made us rich and powerful; gave us colonies; brought us commerce; has been, not our bride, as it was to Venice, but our nurse and our foster-mother. We ought to be a match for all the world afloat; and, virtually, we have been so. If France, then, becomes equally strong, afloat, with us, we must have been retrograding. There was a time when such a competition would have seemed an absurdity. At that time France accepted naval inferiority to England as a mere matter of course.

But that time has gone by—went by twenty years ago and more. Under Louis Philippe there was a resolute determination exhibited to match us, if possible, in naval matters, by the French government; and the Prince de Joinville took the lead in showing how it ought to be set about. Has the reader ever perused the prince's paper on the Mediterranean Squadron, which appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in August, 1852? It is equally curious from its facts and from its tone. His highness shows how a French squadron gradually formed itself, in 1839, on the Levant station, and amounted to thirteen vessels in the November of that year. It was the time of the Turkish difficulties, on which France and England held different views, and the prince expresses himself with great frankness, on the feeling inspired in his squadron by the neighbourhood of ours. His admiral—Lalande—was one of their best officers, and spared no pains to make his force qualified for every contingency. A sentence shall show us the sentiment prevailing on board his ships:

"The Vanguard (says Prince de Joinville) passed close to us, as if the better to show her superiority. It was a beautiful vessel; our jealous eyes could find nothing to criticise in her. . . . The commander—an old man of noble and respectable figure—stayed in his balcony, and saluted us in passing. Perhaps we were prejudiced, but we thought we saw in this salutation another expression than that of cordiality; and a thousand bitter memories made our hearts swell."

Pretty strong this! It conjures up in my mind the whole scene—Besika Bay, with the plains of Troy behind—black rocky Tenedos away opposite—French and English facing each other, where Trojans and Greeks had fought face to face ages ago. I remember the Vanguard (one of Symonds's finest line-of-battle ships) well. She was not only in beautiful, but even in luxurious order; what sailors call "a gingerbread ship." But, bless your highness, old Sir D. D. (the "noble and respectable") never meant anything sarcastic in bowing that fine grey head of his! We did expect to come to blows with your ships that winter, and most of next year; and our squadron was not all it ought to have been, except in heart. But we took things coolly, and never thought of pouting and sneering, as you seem to think we must have been doing.

A few pages afterwards, the prince goes on, speaking of the time when the Eastern question was more and more complicated:

"Our squadron, equal in number to the British squadron, was worth more than it. We fired, as well as they; and we were very superior to them in manoeuvres. . . . To us this spectacle was the naval reawakening of France; we found in it an enjoyment and a patriotic satisfaction that we could not express."

No doubt their enthusiasm was genuine, and our "Naval Peer" tells us that Lalande went so far as to ask leave to attack the British fleet. It is worth people's while to reflect on all this; for the great object of the French government was to establish "a tradition;" and, in the absence of a victory, the tradition of a squadron that believed it could have got a victory is, it thought, better than nothing.

The danger blew over. England went her own road, and France did not resist her. In a few months we youngsters were all singing,

"And what became of Mahmoud Bey?  
He mounted his moko and he rode away;  
And d—d his eyes if he would stay  
At the siege of St. John d'Acre!"

By '41 the Mediterranean station had relapsed into its old, pleasant, gentlemanly, and dissipated dulness. But the French have been proud ever since of "l'escadre de la Méditerranée," and of the compliments paid to it by Sir Charles Napier in Parliament; and we may date from 1839-40 a new hopefulness and activity in the French marine. Since that time they have never wanted the powerful and disciplined nucleus of a strong force.

The face of France changed in '48; the monarchy vanished in a cab; but France, once more revolutionised, did not neglect her navy. That very year she appointed a commission—an *enquête parlementaire*—to overhaul the marine affairs of her empire, to report, and to recommend. The commission did all three, in many scores of business-like sittings. I can only, from my space, give the briefest notices of the results come to by the commissioners, after examining eighty-nine witnesses; but here are a few of them, abridged from the valuable work of our "Naval Peer":

"The number of line-of-battle ships, fixed at forty in 1846, to be raised to forty-five, or thirty afloat and fifteen building."

"The squadron of evolution to consist of ten sail of the line."

"A steam-engine to be fitted to all ships of the line."

"Twenty frigates of great speed, and twenty of less, recommended."

"The command of forts at naval posts to be under the Minister of Marine."

"The Inscription Maritime and Levée Permanente to be preserved."

"Naval cadets in the school-ship to be at sea three months in a year."

"Among ships' companies there shall be a special body of seamen gunners."

"The store of coals at the ocean ports shall be always for one year at the least."

Here is a handful of dragon's teeth out of many, to be sown for future crops of "glory" of the French stamp as quickly as possible. And no doubt the recommendations of this com-

mission have been steadily attended to—and most especially since the Russian war. During the brief interval since that struggle (when the French fleets, acting with ours, made a very respectable figure) our neighbours have been more active than ever. The tables in Mr. Hans Busk's *Navies of the World* surprise us by showing how new their big ships are—their *Algeiras*, *Eylau*, *Arcole*, and so forth. It is impossible to get perfectly exact information on such points, and, in times like these, the facts are changing every week. But the general impression to be derived from the authorities is that, during this summer, France has been equal to us in line-of-battle force, and, on the whole, ahead in the matter of frigates. Our largest vessels seem somewhat superior to theirs, taken altogether. Their nineties, however, of which a line of battle would be mainly composed, seem to be fit to stand up against the corresponding class of any other navy.

Superiority, however, does not depend on ships only. Superiority is the result of the aggregate of advantages. Say that wood, iron, and energy, enable the French to turn out thirty-two screw-liners to our thirty-two—to keep twelve in commission to our twelve in any given sea, and so on—a phenomenon we must expect, if we don't work harder than they, what is the next point of comparison? Just at present it is rather a disadvantageous one for us; it opens the question of "manning."

The French meet this difficulty like a great military and despotic power. Their "inscription" simply views the whole seamen of France as liable to serve in the marine, and organises them accordingly. The Minister of Marine disposes of ninety thousand seamen, as our Scotland-yard disposes of the metropolitan police. The whole system is different from ours, and based on different principles. Our ancestors went to work in a free-and-easy way in manning the navy. They respected the liberty of Jack at ordinary times, and were glad to have him as a volunteer; but they had no notion of doing without him when the country was threatened; and, when fitting out for war, they pressed him, remorselessly. There are old gentlemen now tottering about the seaports who think that "a hot press" would put everything to rights; but they must have observed the signs of the times to little purpose, if they fancy that the system would be found practicable in 1859.

Is there a naval officer who has not waited for weeks and months in port till H.M.S. *Intolerable*, or H.M.S. *Procrastination* had got men enough to proceed to her station decently? Devices are resorted to of all kinds to coax them to enter. Sometimes, seamen are made drunk and "done out of their certificates"—not a very honourable method. Sometimes bills of an electioneering character are placarded over seaport towns, calling on men to rally round So-and-So, the popular skipper of the *Such-and-Such*. Then it is that a captain's former commissions are brought up against him—if he has been a tight hand, "a regular devil;" if, when he

"had" the *Peahen*, the black-list was large, the "liberty" (leave to go ashore) scanty, and all the rest of it. A captain's character sticks to him through life, and is an important element in the manning question. The Admiralty have been known to reserve an unpopular appointment till the time when the vessel has been manned under somebody else, and to effect the change at the last moment. Every "dodge" of the kind tells against the service in the long run; for sailors have longer memories than people generally think, and a sharp eye (like the rest of the world) to their own convenience. If the Admiralty goes on the principle of "using" them, they fairly repay the Admiralty by "using" it.

Manning is our greatest difficulty, and endless plans have been suggested of meeting it. The men do not positively dislike the royal service; only they prefer the greater freedom of the merchant seaman's life. You send ingenious gentlemen to make speeches to them at the seaports. They tell them of the advantages of the navy, and they tell them what is literally true. You live more comfortably, Jack, in a sanitary point of view (which he proceeds to explain). Very true. Look at the attendance and comforts you have, when sick. Yes, sir. Then there is your pension after length of service. Yes, sir. Greenwich Hospital. Very true, sir. And are you ever knocked about in that brutal kind of way aboard a man-of-war that the police reports show us, every now and then, is known aboard merchant men? No, sir. And so the confab goes on. But still there is an impatience of routine—a "wild ass" sort of feeling—in salt human nature, which is hard to contend with, especially during peace time. Men don't go by their mere practical interests; but by a medley of instincts and whimsies far less easy to deal with.

This great obstacle is not altogether to be regretted, however, since this very element in their character is a part of the superiority of our seamen to those of France. But here, again, we are reminded that we live in "changed times." It is the age of steam and artillery. We still count on Tom Bowline; but Tom is not born a gunner, and both Tom and his inferior messmates must submit to drill and discipline before entering into a general action of a scientific character. Seventy years ago, the case would have been more in his favour. Admiral Blowhard would have out-maneuvred the French squadron altogether—got to windward of them—attacked them just when he liked—and pummelled them before they had got their sea-legs. Now, we require more preparation, and a preparation more scientific; and we ought to have a permanent body of naval seamen, just as we have the Horse Guards and the Rifles. The use of a Channel squadron would be to afford these men an exercising ground; and it would be an admirable arrangement if we could have all our naval seamen going into and out of that squadron in turn.

Whatever plan may be ultimately adopted—whether we have to establish a standing naval



force of a certain size, with higher pay and advantages than other seamen—all present means should be taken to make the navy as popular and tempting as possible. A bounty once in a way is, though a violent, a serviceable fillip. Much depends on the conduct of officers themselves in each ship—which should be kindly, hearty, encouraging—without molly-coddling, or undue interference. We do not want the sea-fog—the paternal despot—who irritates by petty and minute regulations, sets his face against smoking, potters over people's welfare, and ruins it by over-nursing. Curiously enough, it is not always the severest men who flog most; their character inspires a certain wholesome respect, which keeps the men in order. As for flogging generally, the feeling of the service is so strongly against any improper amount of it, as to establish a check on the practice. But there might be stronger restraints on it than this, or than the regulation which compels a warrant and twenty-four hours' delay before its infliction. One of the worst features of the punishment is, that there is no definite list of offences for which it is to be inflicted; and that a man may be flogged in one ship for what would be passed over more mildly in the ship lying at the next mooring.

Discipline in its largest sense has not been neglected on the other side of the Channel. The French have dockyards, and ships, and men, and they know that, in all matters military and naval, government is an immense thing.

There is our Admiralty for instance. A country squire to-day, a foolish old lord to-morrow, may be at the head of it, with just as much fitness to manage the navy as to manage a dairy or a paper-mill. He may undo all yesterday's work, dismantle ships and pay off seamen for the sake of a "cry," leaving us a panic and a struggle in reserve for this day twelvemonth. He has not naval help enough, and he does not go the right way to get the best of it. The "Admiralty" is a standing subject of growl, a perennial object of ridicule, on board ship; and the blunders of the institution are at the bottom of that anxiety and uneasiness everywhere felt about our naval affairs. The Admiralty admits no improvement till it is forced upon it; rushes into the opposite extreme when it takes one up, and overdoes it, at the waste of thousands of pounds. Who does not know the story of the new anchor, and mourn over the absurdity of associating ships any longer with that symbol? Who does not know about the iron-built vessels, and the choking up of the Medway? about ships of war broken up without ever being used, pulled to pieces by way of "conversion;" altered in the sterns and spoiled; altered in the bows and then neglected? Above all, who does not know how this beautiful branch of government has managed in the affair of officers, choking up the lists (as it choked up the river above mentioned) by negligence and jobbery, giving commands to dotards, and putting merit on the shelf? We are now suffering (strange to say) at once from too many

admirals, and from the want of one good naval commander.

In France, the Minister of Marine now in office is a seaman; and, though this is not always the case, it is the case with the secretary, who must be a "capitaine de vaisseau," or hold equal rank in one of the branches of the service represented in the council. Of that Council of Admiralty (the Minister of Marine being president) there are "membres titulaires," viz. four flag-officers, an inspector of naval engineers (architecture), a commissary-general, and a captain who has for two years commanded a line-of-battle ship; there are, also "membres adjoints," viz. a capitaine de vaisseau, a first-class naval architect, and a commissary or controller. Briefly, the whole profession in France is represented in the French Admiralty, and that in an efficient manner; for all these officers must be on the active list, and all are appointed for three years at least.

Touching promotion, the French Government makes an effort, at all events, to organise it into a sound system on honest principles. Every year there is prepared by the Council a "Tableau d'Avancement" — Promotion-Table — drawn up after an examination of the reports and recommendations of inspectors-general, commanding-officers of squadrons, and other chiefs of departments. The whole personnel of the service thus passes under review. To describe the whole machinery, would be tedious, but the reader sees the main wheel. It seems rather a complicated scheme; but our simplicity is hardly preferable, for it means no scheme at all. We cannot employ our admirals, and cannot get rid of them: we are starved, and swamped, as regards our general supply of officers, by turns. Party politics and personal connexions carry the day. Somebody's voters, or somebody's aunt:—these are the motive powers of British promotion.

It is important to observe, also, that the French Navy List not being choked as ours is, French officers see much more active and practical service than ours do. The French keep up a squadron of evolution permanently: a system quite neglected in the British navy of late years. How came Jervis, with fifteen ships, to thrash twenty-five Spanish ones? By knowing how to handle them; by knowing how to manœuvre ships as a commander of cavalry manœuvres cavalry. In the great war, a British fleet stuck together for weeks across hundreds of miles of sea. Daylight dawned, and revealed them to each other in their places on the grey water; night came, and the moon found them bowling along harmoniously, like a flock of birds. How different when our friend Rubadub used to creep out of Malta, for a fortnight's cruise in fine weather! "What's that signal?" "Hottentot, keep your station." "Where the blazes is the Ringtail going? Oh, she's missed stays. By Jove! she'll fall aboard the Potentate. No, she won't." Why not keep our squadron (now that we are getting one at last) out for weeks, and let our admirals try those movements in

Sir Howard Douglas's book, of which at present they only talk? If we have a policeman, he may as well be on his beat, and occasionally, also, learning to handle his truncheon.

In the matter of the education of officers, we have lately (within two years) borrowed one good thing from "over the water." The French have a naval school on board a line-of-battle-ship in Brest roads; we have established the illustrious, 74, Captain Harris, for the same purpose at Portsmouth. We are more exacting, too, than we used to be in our examinations. In fact, the modern importance of science forces a higher standard upon us, and we must come up to it to avoid being disgraced. There can be no reason now, why naval officers should not be as generally accomplished as other gentlemen. Many of them are so. What with peace, leisure, constant communication with the shore, all the advantages of travel with the additional zest (a great one) of a reason for travelling; with copious access to books also, and time to read them, there is no excuse for their remaining at the artistic level of Benbow or Shovel, however excellent these worthies may be as merely professional examples. Fifteen years ago there were naval men who sneered at all this, and yet were not Benbows either. They entered the service just in time to imitate the roughness of the real old school; but, being caught by the peace in a year or two, missed that grand Spartan experience of war which to their predecessors was an education in itself. These are the real fogies, whose influence is a nuisance and a bore. They governed the service during the long slumber which came after 1815, and from which we have wakened to find that a new era has begun in Europe, and that the French know it. Let us shelve these old men and their ideas, before they shelve the country's naval power and renown.

The naval power and renown of England are secure, if we do our best to make them so: not if we go to sleep again: not if we pooh-pooh all suggestions of reform, and repose on traditions which were only established by that genius and energy which it has been our modern habit to ignore. Fortify and improve the dockyards; build your ships with an eye (not a hasty but a prudent eye) to the latest inventions; keep up a standing force of trained seamen, making the navy an object of good-will among all seamen under the British flag; institute a formal inquiry into the Admiralty administration of the last twenty years before reforming that department; exercise your officers, from those of the flag downwards, in all that it becomes them to know; do these things, and the country is safe, under Providence, for ever and a day.

The announcement of general reductions by land and sea commenced by our imperial friend opposite, is welcome enough. But we have seen too many of these fluctuations to attach much importance to them; the natural mutual watchfulness of powers like France and England is too deep and permanent a fact in

European politics ever to lose its consequence. Let us, of course, meet all friendly demonstrations with hearty friendliness. But, as regards our navy, it would be easy to make a reduction which might nominally be tantamount to that of the French, yet virtually be something far more serious than theirs. They can whistle their men back when they please; we cannot. They have completed Cherbourg; we have not completed Portsmouth and Plymouth. Besides, there is the old fundamental distinction between us;—a Channel squadron on an island power with commerce and colonies, is a necessity which no squadron can ever be truly and reasonably made out to be to an empire like France.

#### A PIECE OF BLOOD-MONEY.

BOTANY BAY, that mouthful taken out of the land by the hungry sea, on the east shore of Australia, some five miles south of Sydney, was so denominated by Captain Cook, some few years before he was eaten, on account of the nest of wild flowers, bulbs, and creepers that grew on the beach. How little did the observant captain think, when he looked on that primeval nursery-garden of nature, of the moral weeds that were hereafter to fester on this purgatorial coast. How little he foresaw the prickly White-chapel thistles, the Westminster teasles, the Hockley-in-the-Hole brambles, that would one day grow in rank hideousness on this shore, so dark and high that some men, looking this way for a glimpse of heaven for a moment, would scarcely see it, so darkened would be God's blessed sun by the hideous undergrowth and the dark branches of this swampy jungle of crime, and misery, and sin.

A little unpretending book, entitled *Lost and Found*, published by Mr. Bensley, that lately fell into our hands, gives us a curious picture of convict life in 1802. We abridge some of the statements, as furnishing a curious picture of manners, not in Botany Bay but in the neighbouring settlement. The story of Lagged, let us call him so, is affecting but simple. In 1801, Lagged was a well-to-do die-sinker and engraver in Birmingham, with an amiable wife and an only child. During the war with France, forged assignats and forged bank-notes were both common, and were used by politicians, more patriotic than good-principled, to injure the finances of this or that side. The punishment for forgery was death, but men who find it hard to live are sometimes not unwilling to lay down life as the dreadful stake in the gambling game of life. Lagged was the starved apothecary over again; not so starving, but quite as greedy for the gain. One day, to this man thus ready for crime, comes the devil, in the shape of a stranger, muffled to the eyes, false wigged, and otherwise disguised. He whispers a wish that Lagged would prepare an imitation of the Bank of England copper-plates, for the purpose of printing and circulating bank-notes in France. Lagged, in an evil hour, consents. Lagged little knows that the masked man is a government informer, paid with "blood money" for ripen-

ing, discovering, and sometimes inventing crime. Lagged works on at the plate, and finishes it, with anxious and suspicious eyes ever on the door of his workroom. He goes, at the hour and day appointed, to take the plate to Mr. Judas, his employer; is dogged, seized by the constables with the plate in his hands, examined before a magistrate, and swept off to London and Newgate, for what seems certain death.

In prison, Lagged is lucky enough to find friends in some influential visitors; they interest the solicitors and engraver of the Bank of England. Here, religion softens him, and he became a changed man. Soon he is removed to Warwick for trial, pleads guilty, is sentenced to death; and this sentence, ultimately, by influential intercession with the Secretary of State, commuted to transportation for life—a slower and more merciful death. At Warwick gaol, Lagged seems to have been kindly treated, as he gratified the Bank authorities by making many disclosures about the various remedies of forgery. He rose at six, had three cups of tea and a cake for breakfast; two eggs, with a glass of wine, for dinner; and a crust and a glass of wine at night—sometimes a walk in the governor's garden—then bed at eight. At Newgate, he had the chain on his leg, and the degradation of perpetual staring visitors. Here at Warwick, the being allowed nothing but a tin knife was almost his only humiliation. In one week, however, eight men were hung from the prison, for at this time Justice had her weekly battues. It was a terrible moment for the prisoner's heart when his wife came to take farewell of him, and saw, printed in black letters over the fireplace of the cell, those ghastly, coffin-plate words, "IMPRISONED FOR LIFE!"

After narrowly escaping being sent, as some of his persecutors wished, to the West Indies—as soon as the gaols are clear of nine hundred guilty Cains, who have been shipped off—Lagged is sent to a gaol at Portsmouth, and there makes an enemy of a fellow prisoner, who, being reproved for swearing, promises he will get Lagged "double ironed;" but, unluckily striking a turnkey, is himself punished, so fails to fulfil his charitable promise.

At last, comes the order to start. The governor takes him to the shore in his gig, fourteen other prisoners following in a waggon.

Lagged pines for months on board the Captivity hulk, surrounded by five hundred sick, hopeless ruffians, whom he employs his time in teaching. The greatest "black" on board becomes under his care an improved man. All that come near seem to grow gentler and tamer. He will not let his child come to see him, that he may not be shocked by the sight of his father's irons. He found the worst villains the greatest hypocrites, attending the sacrament for the wine, and singing hymns at the captain's door to, what they called, "Blind the Skipper," that is, to induce him not to have them sent to the dreaded Bay. The last days of Lagged in the hulks were spent in cutting ornaments out of beef bones, and in writing to the Bank,

denouncing the wove paper as easily imitable by forgers, and suggesting various precautions.

Going out to "the Bay," Lagged was treated kindly. The convicts never addressed him without putting a respectful Mr. before his name. His wife and child accompany him, and he is allowed the carpenter's cabin for himself and family.

At Rio Janeiro Lagged earned some money by piercing plates for tradesmen's cards, and could have got more by making crucifixes; but in spite of the idols and slave-chains that his native place (Birmingham) exports, his scruples would not let him earn money.

At Derwent River, where a settlement was then forming, Lagged becomes, on landing in Australia, quite a leading mind. He begins the soap trade and buys tallow, and discovers a plant that produces the marine alkali, or soda, equal to the best London pearlash. The governor soon declared he would rather lose any ten persons in the colony than Lagged. At Oystermouth Bay, the quick-witted man feeds his sheep on tea (during a scarcity)—tea which he had found and manufactured himself at Port Phillip. He encourages whale fishing, and makes a large profit by soap. The governor allows him to pursue his own trades, and to build a house close to his.

Of the missionaries of that time, the letters of Lagged give an unsavoury account. Their best man was a sulky old discharged ship's carpenter, who quarrelled with everybody, and was so lazy that he would eat his meat raw rather than take the trouble to cook it. The name of "missionary" was then a byword at Sydney. Some missionaries intrigued with the natives, others entered into trade, and gave up religion as a less profitable profession. Others, as at Otaheite, fomented divisions between two warring tribes of aborigines, which led to a battle, wherein a black king was killed, and the pro-missionaries routed with slaughter. The result was, that the diplomatic missionaries only escaped massacre by at once shipping for Sydney.

Seven years of labour followed, and Lagged, escaping an Irish riot, where three hundred men were killed, grew every day more respected and beloved, and in due time, just after settling at Hobart Town, received a free pardon.

With all the love and good opinion he had here, however, Lagged was never happy. The brand of degradation was on him. The iron had entered into his soul. The scar of the wound was indelible. He burned now, at the close of his life, to expiate the crime he had long since repented of. Strong as were his ties, both of love and interest, in the new colony, he determined to break them all and go and die where he was launched—at home. Governor Collins, now known in history as "the good governor," was deeply sorry to part with so useful a coadjutor as Lagged; but, giving up his house and garden, and well-stocked farm and manufactory, he prepared to sail for England. In the midst of these preparations his friend the governor suddenly fell sick and died. Now his strongest

tie was broken by the stern black hand, he had less than ever to detain him, but he must stay to shed a few tears over the closing grave. With his own hands he had built the governor's house, with his own hands he built the last narrow home, and himself screwed down the lid and engraved the good man's name on the silver coffin-plate.

Lagged little knew, as he worked at that square plate of silver, how soon he, too, would cross the black sea and go where the sun is not. He returned from the good man's funeral nervous and depressed; took to his bed, and in a few days he departed—not for England, but for a more distant world.

Let such stories lead us to temper the severity of our modern laws, remembering the thousands of victims whom the timidity and rage of commercial greed drove in the last century to the scaffold.

### NEW VIEW OF SOCIETY.

IN these times, when a man sits down to write, it is considered necessary that he should have a purpose in view. To prevent any misapprehension on this point, so far as I am personally concerned, I beg to announce at once that I am provided with a purpose of an exceedingly serious kind. I want to know whether I am fit for Bedlam, or not?

This alarming subject of inquiry was started in my mind, about a week or ten days ago, by a select circle of kind friends, whose remarks on the condition of my brains have, since that period, proved to be not of the most complimentary nature. The circumstances under which I have lost caste, intellectually speaking, in the estimation of those around me, are of a singular kind. May I beg permission to relate them?

I must begin (if I can be allowed to do so without giving offence) in my own bedroom; and I must present myself, with many apologies, in rather less than a half-dressed condition. To be plainer still, it was on one of the hottest days of this remarkably hot summer—the time was between six and seven o'clock in the evening—the thermometer had risen to eighty, in the house—I was sitting on a cane chair, without coat, waistcoat, cravat or collar, with my shirt-sleeves rolled up to cool my arms, and my feet half in and half out of my largest pair of slippers—I was sitting, a moist and melancholy man, with my eyes fixed upon my own Dress Costume reposing on the bed, and my heart fainting within me at the prospect of going out to Dinner.

Yes: there it was—the prison of suffocating black broadcloth in which my hospitable friends required me to shut myself up—there were the coat, waistcoat, and trousers, the hideous habilitamentary instruments of torture which Society actually expected me to put on in the scorching hot condition of the London atmosphere. All day long I had been rather less than half dressed, and had been fainting with the heat. At that very moment, alone in my spacious bedroom, with both the windows wide open, and

with nothing but my shirt over my shoulders, I was in the condition of a man who is gradually melting away, who is consciously losing all sense of his own physical solidity.

How should I feel, in half an hour's time, when I had enclosed myself in the conventional layers of black broadcloth? How should I feel, in an hour's time, when I was shut into a dining-room with fifteen of my melting fellow-creatures, half of them, at least, slowly liquefying in garments as black, as heavy, as outrageously unsuited to the present weather as my own? How should I feel in three hours' time, when the evening party, which was to follow the dinner, began, and when I and a hundred other polite propagators of animal heat were all smothering each other within the space of two drawing-rooms, and under the encouraging superincumbent auspices of the gas chandeliers? Society would have been hot in January, under these after-dinner circumstances—what would Society be in July?

While these serious questions were suggesting themselves to me, I took a turn backwards and forwards in my bedroom; and perspired; and sat down again in my cane chair. I got up once more, and approached the neighbourhood of my dress coat, and weighed it experimentally in my arms; and perspired; and sat down again in my cane chair. I got up for the third time, and tried a little eau-de-Cologne on my forehead, and attempted to encourage myself by thinking of the ten thousand other men, in their bedrooms at that moment, patiently putting themselves into broadcloth prisons in all parts of London; and perspired; and sat down again in my cane chair. Heat, I believe, does not retard the progress of time. It was getting nearer and nearer to seven o'clock. I looked, interrogatively, from my dress trousers to my legs. On that occasion, only, my legs were eloquent, and they looked back at me, and said, No.

I rose, in a violent perspiration, and reviled myself bitterly, with my forlorn dress trousers grasped in my hand. Wretch (I said), you are unworthy of the kind attentions of your friends—you are a base renegade from your social duties—you are unnaturally insensible to those charms of society which your civilised fellow-creatures universally acknowledge! It was all in vain. Common Sense—that low-lived quality which has no veneration for appearances—Common Sense, which had not only suggested those terrible questions about what my sensations would be after I was dressed, but had even encouraged my own faithful legs to mutiny against me, now whispered persistently, My friend, if you make yourself at least ten degrees hotter than you are already, of your own accord, you are an Ass—Common Sense drew my trousers from my grasp, and left them in a dingy heap on the floor; led my tottering steps (to this day I don't know how) down stairs to my writing-table; and there suggested to me one of the most graceful epistolary compositions, of a brief kind, in the English language. It was addressed



to my much-injured hostess; it contained the words "sudden indisposition," neatly placed in the centre of a surrounding network of polite phraseology; and when I had sealed it up, and sent it off upon the spot, I was, without any exception whatever, the happiest man, at that moment, in all London. This is a startling confession to make, in a moral point of view. But the interests of truth are paramount (except where one's host and hostess are concerned); and there are unhappily crimes, in this wicked world, which do *not* bring with them the slightest sense of misery to the perpetrator.

Of the means by which I contrived, after basely securing the privilege of staying at home, to get up a nice, cool, solitary, impromptu dinner in my own room, and of the dinner itself, no record shall appear in these pages. In my humble opinion, modern writers of comic literature have already gorged the English public to nausea with incessant eating and drinking in print. Now-a-days, when a man has nothing whatever to say, he seems to me to write, in a kind of gluttonous despair, about his dinner. I, for one, am tired of literary gentlemen who unaccountably take it for granted that I am interested in knowing when they are hungry; who appear to think that there is something exquisitely new, humorous, and entertaining, in describing themselves as swallowing large quantities of beer; who can tell me nothing about their adventures at home and abroad, draw me no characters, and make me no remarks, without descending into the kitchen to fortify themselves and their paragraphs with perpetual victuals and drink. I am really and truly suffering so acutely from the mental dyspepsia consequent on my own inability to digest other people's meals, as served up in modern literature, that the bare idea of ever writing about breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, or supper, in my own proper person, has become absolutely revolting to me. Let my comic brethren of the pen feed in public as complacently and as copiously as they please. For myself, if I live a hundred years, and write a thousand volumes, no English reader—I solemnly declare it—shall ever know what I have had for dinner, in any part of the world, or under any stress of gastronomic circumstances. Dismissing my lonely meal, therefore, with the briefest possible reference to it, let me get on to the evening, and to the singular—or, as my friends consider it, to the crack-brained—occupation by which I contrived to enliven my self-imposed solitude.

It was approaching nine o'clock, and I was tasting the full luxury of my own cool seclusion, when the idea struck me that there was only one thing wanting to complete my sense of perfect happiness. I rose with a malicious joy in my heart; I threw my lightest paletot over my shoulders, put on a straw hat, pulled up my slippers at the heel, and directed my steps to the house of my friend and host, from whose dinner-party "sudden indisposition" had compelled me to be absent. What was my object in taking this extraordinary course? The diabolical

object—for surely it can be qualified by no other term—of gloating over the sufferings of my polite fellow-creatures in the dining-room, from the cool and secret vantage-ground of the open street.

Nine o'clock had struck before I got to the house. A little crowd of street idlers—cool and comfortable vagabonds, happily placed out of the pale of Society—was assembled on the pavement, before the dining-room windows. I joined them, in my airy and ungentlemanlike costume—I joined them, with the sensations of a man who is about to investigate the nature of some great danger from which he has just narrowly escaped. As I had foreseen, the suffocating male guests had drawn up the blinds on the departure of the ladies to the drawing-room, so as to get every available breath of air into the dining-room, reckless of all inquisitive observation on the part of the lower orders in the street outside. Between us—I willingly identify myself, on this occasion, with the mob—and the gorgeously-appointed dessert-service of my friend and host, nothing intervened but the area railings and the low, transparent, wire window-blinds. We stood together sociably on the pavement and stared in. My brethren of the mob surveyed the magnificent *epergne*, the decanters glittering under the light of the chandelier, the fruit, flowers, and porcelain on the table; while I, on my side, occupied myself with the human interest of the scene, and looked with indescribable interest and relish at the guests.

There they were, all oozing away into silence and insensibility together; smothered in their heavy black coats, and strangled in their stiff white cravats! On one side of the table, Jenkins, Wapshare, and two strangers, all four equally speechless, all four equally gentlemanly, all four equally prostrated by the lights, the dinner, and the heat. I can see the two strangers feebly dabbing their foreheads with white pocket-handkerchiefs; Jenkins is slyly looking at his watch; the head of Wapshare hangs helplessly over his finger-glass. At the end of the table, I discern the back of my injured host—it leans feebly and crookedly against the chair—it is such a faint back to look at, on this melancholy occasion, that his own tailor would hardly know it again. On the other side of the table, there are three guests only: Soward, fast asleep, and steaming with the heat; Ripsher, wide awake, and glittering with the heat; and Pilkington—the execrable Pilkington, the scourge of society, the longest, loudest, cruellest, and densest bore in existence—Pilkington alone of all this miserable company still wags complacently his unresting tongue. There is a fourth place vacant by his side. *My* place, beyond a doubt. Horrible thought! I see my own ghost sitting there: the appearance of that perspiring spectre is too dreadful to be described. I shudder in my convenient front place against the area railings, as I survey my own full-dressed Fetch at the dinner-table—I turn away my face in terror, and look for comfort at my street-companions, my worthy fellow outcasts, watching with me on either side. One

of them catches my eye. "Ain't it beautiful?" says my brother of the mob, pointing with a deeply-curved thumb at the silver and glass on the table. "And sich lots to drink!" Artless street-innocent! unsophisticated costermonger! he actually envies his suffering superiors inside!

The imaginary view of that ghost of myself sitting at the table has such a bewildering effect on my mind, that I find it necessary to walk away a little, and realise the gratifying certainty that I am really a free man, walking the streets in my airy paletot, and not the melting victim of Pilkington and Society. I retire gently over the pavement. How tenderly the kind night air toys with the tails of my gossamer garment, flutters about my bare neck, and lifts from time to time the ribbon-ends on my cool straw hat! Oh, my much-injured host, what would you not give to be leaning against a lamp-post, in loose jean trousers (as I lean now), and meeting the breeze lazily as it wantons round the corner of the street! Oh, feverish-sleeping Soward—oh, glittering Ripsher—oh, twin-strangers among the guests, dabbing your damp foreheads with duplicate pocket-handkerchiefs—oh, everybody but Pilkington (in whose sufferings I rejoice), are there any mortal blessings you all covet more dearly, at this moment, than my vagabond freedom of locomotion, and my disgracefully undressed condition of body! Oh, Society, when the mid-year has come, and the heavenly fires of Summer are all a-blaze, what unutterable oppressions are inflicted in thy white and pitiless name!

With this apostrophe (in the manner of Madame Roland) I saunter lazily back to my post of observation before the dining-room windows. So! so! the wretched gentlemen are getting up—they can endure it no longer—they are going to change from a lower room that is hot to an upper room that is hotter. Alterations have taken place, since I saw them last, in the heart-rending pantomime of their looks and actions. The two strangers have given up dabbing their foreheads in despair, and are looking helplessly at the pictures—as if Art could make them cooler! Jenkins and Wapshare have shifted occupations. This time, it is Wapshare who is longingly looking at his watch, and Jenkins who is using his finger-glass; into the depths of which I detect him yawning furtively, under cover of moistening his lips. Sleepy Soward has been woke up, and sits steaming and staring with protuberant eyes and swollen cheeks. The glittering face of Ripsher reflects the chandelier, as if his skin was made of glass. Execrable Pilkington continues to talk. My host of the feeble back is propped against the sideboard, and smiles piteously as he indicates to his miserable guests the way up-stairs. They obey him, and retire from the room in slow funeral procession. How strangely well I feel; how unaccountably strong and cool and blandly composed in mind and body!—Hoi! hoi! hoi! out of the way there! Lord bless your honour! crash! bang! Here is the first carriage bursting in among us like a shell; here are the linkmen scattering us off the pavement,

and receiving Society with all the honours of the street. The Soirée is beginning. The scorching hundreds are coming to squeeze the last faint relics of fresh air out at the drawing-room windows. How strangely well I feel; how unaccountably strong and cool and blandly composed in mind and body!

I once more join my worthy mob-brethren; I add one to the joyous human lane which watches the guests as they go in, and which has not got such a thing as a dress-coat on either side of it. I am not in the least afraid of being recognised—for who would suppose it possible that I could conduct myself in this disgraceful manner? Ha! the first guests are well known to me. Sir Aubrey Yollop, Lady Yollop, the two Misses Yollop. "What time shall we order the carriage?" "Infernal nuisance coming at all this hot weather—get away as soon as we can—carriage wait!"—Crash! bang! More guests known to me. Doctor and Mrs. Gripper, and Mr. Julius Gripper. "What time shall we order the carriage?" "How the devil should I know?" (Heat has made the doctor irritable) "The carriages are ordered, sir, at one." "I can't and won't stand it, Mrs. Gripper, till that time—cursed tomfoolery giving parties at all, this hot weather—carriage at twelve." Crash! bang! Strangers to me, this time. A little dapper man, fanning himself with his hat; a colossal old woman, with a red-hot garnet tiara and a scorching scarlet scarf; a slim, cool, smiling, serenely stupid girl, in that sensible half-naked costume which gives the ladies such an advantage over us at summer evening parties. More difficulty with these, and the next dozen arrivals, about ordering the carriage—more complaints of the misery of going out—nobody sharp enough to apply the obvious remedy of going home again—all equally ready to bemoan their hard fate and to rush on it voluntarily at the same time. I look up, as I make these reflections, to the drawing-room story. Wherever the windows are open, they are stopped up by gowns; wherever the windows are shut, Society expresses itself on them in the form of steam. It is the Black Hole at Calcutta, ornamented and lit up. It is a refinement of slow torture unknown to the Inquisition and the North American savages. And the name of it in England is Pleasure—Pleasure when we offer it to others, which is not so very wonderful; Pleasure, equally, when we accept it ourselves, which is perfectly amazing.

While I am pondering over Pleasure, as Society understands it, I am suddenly confronted by Duty, also as Society understands it, in the shape of a policeman. He comes to clear the pavement, and he fixes me with his eye. I am the first and foremost vagabond whom he thinks it desirable to dismiss. To my delight, he singles me out, before my friend's house, on the very threshold of the door, through which I have been invited to pass in the honourable capacity of guest, as the first obstruction to be removed. "Come, I say, you there—move on!" Yes, Mr. Policeman, with pleasure. Other men, in

my situation, might be a little irritated, and might astonish you by entering the house and revealing themselves indignantly to the footman. I am a philosopher; and I am grateful to you, Mr. Policeman, for reminding me of my own liberty. Yes, official sir, I *can* move on; it is my pride and pleasure to move on; it is my great superiority over the unfortunate persons shut up in that drawing-room, not one of whom can move on, or has so much as a prospect of moving on, for some time to come. Wish you good evening, Mr. Policeman. In the course of a long experience of Society, I never enjoyed any party half as much as I have enjoyed this; and I hardly know any favour you could ask of me which I am so readily disposed to grant as the favour of moving on. Many, many thanks; and pray remember me kindly at Scotland-yard.

I leave the scene—or, rather, I am walked off the scene—in the sweetest possible temper. The carriages crash and bang past me by dozens; the victims pour into the already over-crammed house by twenties and thirties; Society's gowns and Society's steam are thicker than ever on the windows, as I see the last of them. Shocking! shocking! I am almost ashamed to feel so strangely well, so unaccountably strong and cool and blandly composed in mind and body.

On my airy way home (in excellent time) I endeavour — being naturally a serious and thoughtful man—to extract some useful result for others out of my own novel experience of Society. Animated by a loving and missionary spirit, I resolve to enlighten my ignorant fellow-creatures, my dark surrounding circle of social heathen, by communicating to them my new discovery of the best way of attending London dinner-parties and soirées in the fervid heat of July and August. In the course of the next few days I carry out my humane intention by relating the true narrative here set down to my most valued and intimate friends. I point out the immense sanitary advantages which are likely to accrue from the general adoption of such a sensible and original course of proceeding as mine has been. I show clearly that it must, as a matter of necessity, be followed by a wise change in the season of the year at which parties are authorised to be given. If we were all to go and look in at the windows in our cool morning costume, and then come away again, the masters and mistresses of houses would have no choice left but to adapt their hospitalities sensibly to atmospheric circumstances; summer would find us as summer ought to find us, in the fields; and winter would turn our collective animal heat to profitable and comfortable results.

I put these plain points unmistakably; but to my utter amazement nobody accepts my suggestions. My friends, who all groan over giving hot parties and going to hot parties, universally resent my ingeniously unconventional plan for making parties cool; and universally declare that no man in his right senses could have acted in such an outrageously uncustomary manner as

the manner in which I represent myself to have acted on the memorable evening which these pages record. Apparently, the pleasure of grumbling is intimately connected, in the estimation of civilised humanity, with the pleasure of going into Society? Or, in other words, ladies and gentlemen particularly like their social amusements, as long as they can *say* that they don't like them. And these are the people who indignantly tell me that I could hardly have been in my right senses to have acted as I did on the scorching July evening of my friend's dinner. The rest who went into the house, to half suffocate each other, at the very hottest period of the year, are all sensible persons; and I, who remained outside in the cool, and looked at them comfortably, am fit for Bedlam? Am I?

### STORM EXPERIENCE.

If there be any matter about which I am enthusiastic it is Thunder and Lightning. I love it. And yet, strange to say, up to the age of thirteen years it inspired me with a painful terror. Of this terror, which amounted to a disease, I was cured in one night aboard a man-of-war, a line-of-battle ship. We were in Bass's Straits, where it lightens and thunders in real earnest. It was twelve o'clock at night; the watch below had been piped on deck, and before the relief took place, the well-known voice of the first lieutenant gave the mandate, "Reef the top-sails: mizen, fore, and main!" Cool as the freshening breeze was, I perspired from head to foot, and I could distinctly hear the beating of my young heart; for I well knew that in less than half a minute, as soon as the hands were all aloft, the fiat would go forth, as it did in all weathers and under any circumstances, "Midshipmen into the tops to see the points tied!" I had often been aloft before, but never in a thunderstorm; and no craven culprit about to suffer death on the scaffold ever experienced pangs of fear superior to mine when I placed my hands on the shrouds (the main shrouds), and lightly touched with my feet the lower ratlings. There were no less than eighteen of us appointed to this duty, six into each top. The boy who accompanied me (he is an admiral now, and one of the most distinguished officers in the royal navy) was, thank Heaven, as much terrified as myself. I say "thank Heaven," for it was the witnessing of his fear that inspired me to take the *courage* which I knew he would emulate. "Come along!" I said to him, "come along!" He responded, and we literally raced for the lubber's hole, through which we crept, and then stood in the top to survey the scene. And such a scene! There were no flashes of lightning and no peals of thunder. There was one continuous blaze of lurid glare, and there was roar, and roar, and roar, without any intermission. It was all lightning, lightning, lightning, thunder, thunder, thunder, "nothing but thunder" and lightning. If every piece of ordnance that man ever invented and brought into the

field of battle had been simultaneously discharged that night, the combined sound would have been as a whisper compared to the roar of heaven's artillery that thundered in the skies. We once in a harbour fired a starboard broadside, to burst the gall and bring up to the surface of the water the dead body of an officer who was unhappily drowned in coming off to the ship. It shook to their very foundation the walls of a fortress, and broke the windows of every house within a quarter of a mile from us, not excepting those of the Government House; but I am quite sure that if every cannon on board had been fired that night, we in the top would have been ignorant thereof, except from the shaking of the vessel, so awfully loud was the thunder. We had lightning-conductors, of course, and on the decks were various metallic substances which attract, or are supposed to attract, lightning; but neither the ship, nor any one on board of her, was injured, albeit we frequently saw the forked fluid descend into the waves at no great distance from us.

I could not help looking at the faces of the men, as they lay along the yard, tying the reef knots. Not one of them exhibited any fear, nor anything approaching bravado. There was no talking aloft, but after we returned to the deck I took an opportunity of asking a man, who was a great favourite of mine, what he felt on the occasion? "Well, sir," he replied, "to tell you the truth, I should not have liked to have been up there all alone, but where there's so many on a yard it makes all the difference; the chances are, if the yard is struck, you may not be the man who is killed." And this appeared to be the general feeling of the men. In proportion to the number of sharers in the danger individual fears diminish.

Up to that night the thunderstorm, to which I have just alluded, was the heaviest that I had ever seen, on land or at sea. Since then I have travelled round and over the whole world, and in some climates have witnessed storms which in their grandeur have eclipsed any that I witnessed off the coast of New Holland, or in the interior of that colony.

In the harbour of Rio, I once saw a very pretty and very grand thunderstorm, which lasted the whole night and the following day without intermission. The lightning, however, was chiefly "sheet lightning," though now and then "chained" or "forked" was visible, and not far off.

On the coast of Java and Sumatra, these storms are so frequent that it must be, indeed, an awful one to attract attention. Such a storm I saw in 1842. We were in sight of land, though twenty miles distant. It was just such a storm as the Shannon encountered in the same latitude, when the late Captain Peel was taking her to the East. (A description of it appeared in several of the illustrated papers.)

During a residence of several years in Calcutta I did not witness more than two thunderstorms that made any impression on me. Of course I saw, in the course of every summer, at

least a dozen that would be considered "frightfully heavy" in Europe, but the reader will be pleased to remember that I am speaking comparatively, and that since my return to Europe I have really "missed" my Australian and Asiatic thunder. The Calcutta storms twisted every lightning conductor on almost every building, public and private, and killed numbers of those valuable birds as scavengers, commonly called adjutants. The loss of human life, however, was very trifling. Two natives in the bazaar only were killed. No one ever heard, I believe, of a European being killed in Calcutta by lightning, although numbers of vessels in the Hooghly have been struck and set on fire. During a residence of six years in the upper provinces of India, I witnessed only three great storms. One was at Meerut, in 1847; one at Agra, in 1849; and one at Benares, in 1851.

The Meerut storm was very grand in tone, loudness, and light, but the country was too flat, and not sufficiently picturesque, to give it any "loveliness" to the eye. There was nothing to light up but a few bungalows and moderately sized trees. Some cattle were killed, and a few goats; but only one man, a native, was injured.

The Agra storm, which I witnessed from the lofty battlements of the fortress, I would not have missed on any account. The thunder was loud, long, and rolling; the lightning (sheeted) almost red, and the "chained," or "forked," pale blue, and when you looked at it and watched it, you experienced a sensation of coldness—real coldness—not the coldness that is often the result of fear; it cooled the blood and the marrow in the bones, without fluttering the heart, or making the nerves tremble. And here, too, the scenery, in the strict sense of the word, failed. But there was one glorious object that the lightning tore from the darkness of night, and revealed to my eyes and those of the friend who stood with me on that large, black marble stone, on which Ackbar Shah used to sit—that stone which was struck by lightning and split across, in the reign (I think) of Aurunzebe. (The Hindoos, of course, regarded the breaking of that stone as an omen foretelling the fall of the Mahomedan dynasty.)

What was the one glorious object? It was the snow-white marble walls of the Taj Mahal, with the broad stream of the river Jumna lavishing their foundation. Every minaret was distinctly visible, and with an opera-glass I could trace the gigantic Arabic characters inscribed on the centre building, and desery in the distant fields the golden ears of corn waving in the gentle breeze, until the hail came and battered them. Numbers of oxen were killed by the hail, but the lightning, which lasted the whole night, did not destroy a single human life.

The Benares storm I had the joy of beholding from the minarets. That storm was also in the night, and was grand to the last degree. But, like the Meerut and Agra storms, it wanted scenery.

The storms in Italy and Switzerland are very beautiful, and well worthy of those glorious stanzas of Lord Byron, beginning



The sky is changed! and such a change! oh, night Of storm and darkness! &c.

I once stayed a month at Lausanne, on purpose to see a thunderstorm on Lake Léman, and witnessed one that the inhabitants thought very severe. In comparison with others I had seen, and may describe presently, I did not think much of it, though it was certainly exceedingly beautiful, the lightning flashing continually, and the thunder very loud and reverberating. At Beveno, too, I saw a storm that lighted up the Lago Maggiore, and the islands thereon, and the heights behind the solitary inn at which I had put up.

But those who really wish to witness the grandest of all scenes in the world must journey to the Himalaya Mountains—to Mussoorie, especially—and behold the thunderstorm that usually ushers in the rainy season—about the middle of June, or early in July. For some days previously the weather, even in the mountains, is intolerably hot, while from the plains below you can see the steam and vapour rising and mingling with the atmosphere. Dehwah Dhoon, too, is enveloped in mist. It takes at least three days for one of these storms to gather the materials for its matchless strength. On the evening of the first day you can descry, at the setting of the sun, banks of dense, dark clouds, which wall in the horizon; on the second day, they are denser and higher; on the third day, denser and higher still. The battle generally begins in the plains. You can see from Mussoorie the lightning, and the hail, and hear the distant thunder; while all around you, on the mountains, is calm and still, and in reserve—the sun sometimes shines while the plains are wrapped in the storm. Towards night the Dhoon, seven miles distant, takes up the strain, and becomes a perfect blaze of light, while the mountains still hold their ordnance in reserve. Dense as is the rain and hail in the Dhoon, the lightning shows the barracks, the church, and the dwellings of the residents. Ere long there comes a flash of lightning, which is instantly followed by a deafening clap of thunder, which rolls and reverberates through the innumerable deep valleys for several minutes. This is soon followed by another flash, and another roar even louder than the first, and before its rolling is half completed, there comes another and another, in rapid succession. Farewell to sleep, all you who wish to sleep on such a night! Now is the time to stand out in a verandah and watch the progress of the storm. The Dhoon—a plain twenty times the extent of Domo d'Ossola—is lighted up by her own incessant flashes; and so are the plains beyond the pass which skirts the Dhoon; while all around you, far and near, is one constant blaze of lurid glare, which reveals to the eye every mountain and valley, every rock and every tree thereon or therein.

To me there is nothing more provoking than to see persons, especially ladies (and sensible women on all other points), in a state of intense alarm during a thunderstorm. They say they

cannot help it, and perhaps they cannot, because they have never been educated to help it. If the truth were known they were, when little children, just as frightened of a cold bath; but they were dipped, nevertheless, and inured to it. One lady will tell you that the thunder makes her head ache; another that the lightning hurts her eyes. As children they were no doubt alarmed by the report of a pistol, and cried at the sight of the soap, so painful to the eyes. Had they been inured to look at these storms as soon as they could be made to understand their use and admire their magnificence, the case would be otherwise.

The Jews open all their doors and windows during a thunderstorm. This is in obedience to a religious tenet: it is expected that the Messiah will come. There can be no question that opening the doors and windows lets out the foul air and admits the fresh; and this is a matter of no small importance to persons who value their health and comfort. I am not aware that the houses of the Jews, or the Jews who reside in them, are struck by lightning oftener than other people, or that they have any reason to repent of their rational proceeding in this respect.

I was at a dinner-party a few weeks ago, and, soon after the cloth was removed, the lightning began to play, and thunder was heard in the distance. The lady of the house became alarmed, and gave sundry orders to her servants. The first was to pin a large cloak over the mirror; the second, to remove the fire-irons; the third, to close the shutters and draw the curtains. The atmosphere was unbearable, for the day had been intensely warm, and I never felt more rejoiced than when I took my departure. Oh! what a luxury to get out into the street, and enjoy the cool air!

If it be urged that "it is impossible to cure nervous people of their fears," I admit it, supposing those fears to have become rooted. But the great point is to begin early, with boys and girls. Children may be taught not to fear thunder and lightning, just as they are taught not to fear the sea. To neglect teaching them is to exhibit an indifference to their happiness in after life.

#### ALDRSHOTT TOWN AND CAMP.

WHATEVER Aldershott may have been in the former history of its country, it is now a place which the British soldier has thoroughly taken by storm. He has squatted (in obedience to superior orders) upon its peat and sandy common; he has pitched his white tents in groups upon the scanty patches of grass, until they look, in the distance, like conjurors' cups arranged upon a green baize table; he has had planted his long black rows of dwarfed wooden huts down the gravelly slopes, like streets in the early days of some English colonial settlement; and he has had built a long and lofty range of clean, new yellow-brick barracks which overshadow the little mushroom town that has risen up hurriedly to meet and trade with them.

Along the High-street of this military village runs a single line of railway, devoted to the carriage of coal and building material for the large barrack streets that are still being erected for the accommodation of future cavalry regiments. Every hour of the day a train of luggage trucks is panting along this tramway, and the only wonder is, that the driver who conducts the engine is not attired in some variety of military undress costume. The omnibuses that come in at intervals from the different railway stations are more often loaded with scarlet heroes in the shape of non-commissioned officers, than with the dingy-coated civilian who is always smoking the pipe of peace. The old familiar face of the Hansom cab is seen in the one main street of this mushroom village, as well as its companion vehicle that runs upon four wheels. A little search will discover a well-stocked stable-yard, as full of these metropolitan conveyances as any cabman's mews in town.

The old red-brick poor-house has been taken possession of—has been legally purchased, I suppose, from the parochial authorities—as an hospital for invalided soldiers. Walking in a small, dusty garden, or sitting on benches under the shadow of the side walls, are a number of convalescents, dressed in light blue serge trousers, jackets, and night-caps, which make them look like comic performers of the Pierrot class in a circus of French horse-riders.

The mushroom village does not seem able to increase its building accommodation fast enough. Twenty thousand men (the number at present stationed in barracks, huts, and tents) require amusement; to say nothing of the officers, who require various little luxuries, and furniture for their quarters. Scaffold-poles, and unfinished brickwork are seen sprouting up at each end of the straggling mile of shops and houses, while the ringing of trowels and the noise of hammers striking nails into wooden planks mingle with the incessant roll of drums from the barracks and the blowing of bugles from the camp beyond an intervening hill. Certain enterprising speculators are not content to wait for the slow, substantial work of bricklayers and stonemasons, and they have erected little roadside zinc structures in which to carry on their commerce, imported from an emigrant's house *dépôt* in London in a few hours, and put up in a single night. The wooden shed is not unrepresented in the town, any more than in the camp, and the whole line of houses—large and small—is joined together in some places with clothes'-lines of dangling stockings and shirts. Bright, new, glaring shops are opened for active business before they are painted, or finished; and the stock-in-trade of one furnishing draper (the chief warehouseman in the place) has fairly oozed out into the road.

The titles of most houses have a warlike character, and those who do not advertise themselves as being "by appointment to the camp," attract attention by sticking up "Sebastopol" or "Waterloo House," the "British Hero," and the "Crimean Arms." The road in front of

these places is either the dusty highway which has few traces of country left; a patch of mangy common which still exists to show the miserable little plot of village that answered to the name of Aldersholt half a dozen years ago, or a layer of egg-shaped stones thrown down in a swampy piece of ground before the crowded doors.

Towards evening the British soldier comes out to be amused. If he is quartered in the barracks, or the huts, and is not under canvas, nor yet upon guard, he is at liberty up to half-past nine P.M., at which time he is summoned back to his quarters by the firing of guns, and the sound of regimental bands. A special order will allow him to enjoy the seductive gaieties of the town long after this time, but these privileges are granted to very few. If he neglects to return to his disconsolate regiment at the appointed period, he suffers for it the next day, and several following days, by the extra exertion of "pack drill," if not by a more severe punishment; for the shadow of the hateful "cat" still hovers over the pet military settlement, still comes up through the dust and theatrical glory of a sham field-day, still dims the brightness of the medal and the cross.

About seven o'clock P.M. the British soldier rushes into the mushroom town of Aldersholt for entertainment, and the mushroom town of Aldersholt responds most vigorously to the call. The private soldier is able to save about threepence-halfpenny or fourpence out of his threepence a-day, and this, by a mutual arrangement with some comrade who is on duty for that particular night, is swelled into sevenpence or eightpence. A party of six men will sometimes club together, making a common fund of their individual savings, and this will give the one man out, the command of about two shillings.

When two or three thousand soldiers are prowling about, with only two or three hours of time before them, and only fourpence each in their pockets, it is not surprising that a number of beer-shops should strive to commend themselves to their notice. There are wooden beer-shops, and brick beer-shops, central public-houses (those immediately opposite the leading barracks, and the road over the hill into the camp), and zinc beer-shops, pitched at the extreme end of the present town-line. There is a very primitive, early Australian mingling of occupations exhibited in some of these mushroom taverns, and while it is probable that you could have your hair properly cut by some of the landlords who draw a rather muddy ale for the refreshment of the British soldier in his hours of relaxation, it is certain that one public-house displays an announcement in its windows about photographic likenesses being taken within at a moderate price. There have been many combinations over the tavern counter before this, but it was reserved for Aldersholt to get rid of the conventional sandwich which has hitherto—for fourpence—gone with the glass of ale, and to substitute a doubtless highly artistic portrait in its place.

No tavern, however small, has the boldness or the folly to attempt to attract the British soldier, without providing him with a room in which he can either sing, or hear singing—can either dance, or be amused by professional performers who dance. To obtain this very necessary hall of entertainment nearly every back garden has been covered over with a rude, temporary structure, having something of the camp-hut in its composition, and something of the travelling show. Those houses that have been denied the advantages of a back garden are driven to erect a side building, which sticks out, like a huge wen, from the main establishment. Some have pressed the first-floor rooms into this semi-theatrical service, and a small stage with a very hastily painted back scene, and two wings of forest-trees, like nothing known by botanical students, are erected at one end of the largest apartment, covering about the same space as a very small shop-front, and being approached by a short flight of movable steps. In these rooms the British soldier assembles in happy, half-drunken, beer-table rank and file, and in the intervals between the appearance of the “infant Teresa,” who has just gone through the Highland fling, and the appearance of “Madame de Pumpadoor, the great English soprano,” he is gratified by witnessing a solemn amateur hornpipe performed by a corporal with two medals dangling from his breast, whose motions are directed by the harmony of an ear-piercing fife and jingling piano, and whose bronzed and bearded face, when he leaps up every now and then, disappears amongst the “flies,” like the automaton skeleton’s head in the street Fantoccini theatre.

Not far from this entrancing temple of recreation on the first floor is another temple on the ground floor, the programme of whose entertainments, placed upon a board outside the door, in coloured, ill-drawn letters, comprises singing, hornpipes, and Ethiopian serenading up to the military time of half-past nine, and “dancing after gun-fire.” Looking through the open door into a kind of tent, with a stage at the bottom, you see a solid square of military audience, the scarlet coat of the Guards relieving the half-naval blue hussar-like uniform of the Royal Artillerymen, and the more sombre green dress of the regular Rifle Corps. The undress cap which these latter soldiers wear in their hours of ease contrasts very favourably with that fearful shako, whose body is like a patent leather crueble or pipkin, and whose summit, at the fore part, is ornamented with a round mossy black ball, that looks like a property apple placed upon the bonnet of Tell’s (theatrical) child, and which must be a fruitful source of temptation as a target to those who are anxious to try their skill with the rifle. Heavy as the leather shako is, when weighed in the scale against other purgatorial penal hats, it must certainly be considered light and airy by the side of the artillery rough beaver head-gear. This drum-shaped military hat, which looks like a lady’s hand muff, is heavier and warmer than even the

immortal grenadier’s cap. They are all a protection against sun and rain, and they all need a protection against themselves.

The attractions of these two concert-saloons are not sufficient to silence the voice or dim the lustre of the Apollo Music Hall, which, having the rather unpromising frontage of a labourer’s cottage (part of the original village), suddenly invested with a liquor and music license, and being separated from the main road by the mangy bit of swampy common before alluded to, is compelled to hang out rather prominent signs of the entertainment and conviviality to be found within. A chandler’s shop, not far from this abode of melody, has set up a tap of drinkable beer, and though it has not yet been able to bud into the full honours of the Aldershot music-halls, it is not without a little knot of patrons bearing the true military stamp. The eggs, the bacon, the butter, tea and cheese, and the loaves of bread, are huddled in a heap in a small window and a few shelves on one side of the shop, while all the available space on the other side is turned into a small red-curtained tap-room. The stray child who goes to this mongrel shop for its mother’s breakfast or tea is introduced with gaping mouth into all the humours of rollicking military canteen life, and is made to take a sip out of a mug of ale by a staggering hero in a scarlet coat, while its packet of grocery knick-knacks is being prepared.

The British soldier is not entirely of a musical turn, and though he is seen through many tavern-room windows standing up against a fireplace, with his eyes fixed upon the ceiling, in a rapt and enthusiastic manner, singing a sentimental song for the amusement of his comrades, or leading a wild chorus in which they are all endeavouring to join, he likewise haunts the roadside in little knots, which look, at a distance, like beds of geraniums, and he marches in along the dusty main road in groups of ten or twelve, as if he had been for an evening walk to Farnborough, or some adjacent town.

Scarlet does not always consort with scarlet, nor green with green; and a Stirlingshire militiaman, in his white jacket, plaid trousers, and Scotch cap, relieves the monotony of colour by walking between two green riflemen and an artilleryman in blue.

A close examination of the many passing sun-burnt faces shows how largely the Irish peasant has, at some time or another, taken the Queen’s shilling, as well as the agricultural operative of our provincial farms and fields. The Scotchman is there, in spite of his reputed caution and love of money; and the Yorkshireman is sometimes content to forget his proverbially assigned keenness, and to mount guard, fire cannon, and practise with the sword. One class, however, has never yet been represented in the British army, and probably never will be, and that is the English Jew. Whatever trouble or madness has fallen upon the chosen people of Old Jewry in this country since the bad old times when they were persecuted by half-savage kings, there has never yet been any young runaway sprig of

Israel who was weak enough to rush into the arms of that model dancing-master-looking, faultlessly-dressed sergeant, who stands at likely street corners with those fluttering ribbons and that light and elegant gold-headed cane. He has been weak enough to get into Parliament, but he has never been weak enough to get into the ranks.

It is an affecting sight to see a couple of soldiers staggering under the too heavy weight of their detestable shakos, and not, of course, under the strength of the Aldersholt ale, supporting each other, although belonging to different corps, to the best of their ability; wearing their oppressive head-dresses tilted over to the backs of their heads (of course, for relief), regardless of the even set of a breast-belt, or an epaulette (of course for the same reason), their eyes dull and sleepy, their steps uncertain, their mouths vainly endeavouring to relate some barrack story, and their hands ever ready to give the proper mechanical military salute to every person whom they pass. As the evening advances, many groups of these suffering military pedestrians may be seen upon the Aldersholt roads, the stiffness of the tried soldier, in which they started with such pride from their barracks, having entirely melted away, and their bodies being as limp as those of the rawest recruit who has never had the advantage of a day's effective drill. They are not always the latest to get into hut or barracks, although so seemingly uncertain in their steps. Sometimes they escape the sentries, and roll into their own proper beds; at other times they pass their slumbers in a cell of the guard-house, to dream, towards morning, of "pack-drill," or, perhaps, the "cat."

Mingling with these men for a moment, but hurrying by them with the dignity of a heavy day's good work done, and done well, and the sense of another heavy day's work to follow to-morrow, will be half a dozen stonemasons and bricklayers, speeding home with their empty dinner-basins swinging in handkerchiefs from their hands. No signs of fraternity are exchanged between these soiled and powdered labourers and the steady or unsteady red, white, blue, and green groups of lounging heroes whom they pass. They each belong to different worlds, and they know it.

The principal resort of the "crack" soldiers and the non-commissioned officers (corporals, sergeants, sergeant-majors, and such-like) is a crimson music-hall attached to the principal hotel in the mushroom town. This place is well ventilated by numerous windows that open on a small side street, and is fitted up with a stage, the chief object at the back of which is a clear-faced, full-sized circular clock. The moment the hands of this clock draw near half-past nine P.M. the amusements (consisting chiefly of singing) work up to a climax; allusion is made to the approach of "gun-fire" from the stage; an acrobat boy, in crimson leggings and spangled body, makes himself very busy in washing the empty glasses of the drinkers; while his father, a middle-aged acrobat, in a precisely similar

dress, is extremely active in performing the duties of a waiter. The leading comic singer having sung his last popular song, for that night, to an almost exclusively military audience, comes down from the stage to exchange congratulations all round, with his scarlet and blue admirers (after the style so much in fashion at distinguished London music-halls); the hands of the stage clock reach the expected period, the gun fires, the bugles sound, a brass band at the opposite barracks begins to play, the soldiers slowly disperse, having a quarter of an hour's grace before them; and a long interval takes place in the amusements of the crimson saloon, until its civilian patrons begin, somewhat later, to assemble.

Following the last military straggler, I pass a little knot of artillerymen, who are taking an affectionate leave of two young ladies (without bonnets) at the corner of the street, and ascend the gravelly hill before me, on which stand the huts of the staff-officers of the camp; for I have arranged to pass the night in the quarters of my friend, Lieutenant Hongwee, of the Antrim Rifles.

I reach the brow of the hill in the dark, leaving the row of lights of the mushroom town beneath me, and behind me, and coming upon long, silent, black lines of huts, varied and divided by broad gritty roads of stony gravel, and surmounted by a wide semicircle of streaky orange horizon in front.

Before I have found out the line of huts, and the particular "block" in which I am to pass the night, I am challenged half a dozen times by half a dozen sentries, but as I reply, according to my instructions, "A friend," I am not arrested, run through the body, nor shot through the head.

I pass a few glimmering lights in hut windows, and a few murmuring huts, where the men are divided off in small parties to sleep, and find my lodging on the tented field at last.

Lieutenant Hongwee's quarters (like the quarters of every subaltern) are not sufficiently commodious to accommodate two persons with comfort; but that young and promising officer is taking his turn as the captain of the watch (a twenty-four hours' guard-house duty which falls to his lot, perhaps, once in six months), and I have full permission to usurp his bed. If any difficulty should occur (which is not anticipated), I am furnished—no doubt, against strict military rule—with the "parole" and "counter-sign." "Romsey" will carry me through anything (except officers' practical jokes) up to the solemn midnight hour, and "Stockport" will be of equal service to me at any time afterwards.

After being disturbed by a variety of noises throughout the night, the clanking of arms, and the talking of the men on guard in the adjacent guard-house, the squabbling of the sentry when he took a drunken straggler into custody, and the mysterious humming of the telegraphic wires, which stretch across the line of the camp, and form a gigantic Æolian harp; the dweller in



the hut is thoroughly awakened at five o'clock A.M. by the sound of bugles arousing the men for the day. The officer seldom makes his appearance before the hour of ten A.M., having nothing to do before the parade duty at eleven A.M.; but the men are considerably beat into bed at the almost infantine time of half-past nine at night, and they are punctually beat up in the morning to be stirring with the lark.

The hut of a subaltern may be described in its outline as part of a coal-shed, a corner in a black, tarred wooden block that is all ground floor. These huts are built of rough, unseasoned planks, too thin to keep out the cold in winter, or the heat in summer. The temperature, even at five o'clock on a July morning, is that of a bakehouse shortly after the batches of bread have been drawn. The sun finds means to come through the slender roof, if it does not appear in actual beams upon the floor.

The taste of a young officer may lead him to decorate this cupboard in any variety of style, but the size of the area to be decorated will impose a limit on his fancy. There is room for a small iron bedstead, a table, a washstand, a chest of drawers, and two chairs; which will leave about a square yard of flooring for exercise and the toilet. A fireplace and one small six-pane window complete the fittings of these huts, which look like the lodgings let to single young men about Stepney, at two shillings a week, or the summer-houses that used to be erected in the grounds of the market-gardeners at Hoxton.

A "block," as it is called, contains six compartments, each one of which is considered to be sufficient for a sub-officer's sleeping quarters. A captain takes two of these cupboards; and a field officer the whole block of six.

Standing upon the brow of the hill at the highest part of the South Camp (on the other side of which lies Aldershott Town), and looking towards the north, the whole encampment lies in a hollow bow before you. At your side is the hut of General Knollys, the commander-in-chief at the camp: who saw a night attack about five-and-forty years ago. The ostensible design of Aldershott is the practical education of the soldier and his officer.

The huts of the South Camp are arranged in alphabetical lines, or rows, for the sake of easy reference, and they stretch down the gravelly slope, towards the north, in many broad black parallels for full half a mile, until they reach the sandy flat that lies between them and the North Camp, on the further ascent. This flat is divided by a canal that is crossed by a pontoon bridge supported by tubs; the real artillery glowing red pontoons lying high and dry at the side, looking like gigantic German sausages of a light and brilliant hue. A winding gravel pathway crosses this desert for nearly a mile, and then you enter the corresponding black lines of the North Camp huts, which look thinner from the distance, and ascend for another half mile upon a more moderate slope.

A line of these huts, in which, perhaps, the

officers and men of two different corps may be quartered, is constructed in divisions, each one of which is exactly like all the rest.

There is a bread-hut, a meat-hut, and a library-hut; a men's school-hut, a children's school-hut, which latter looks like the national schools in many small villages. There are a number of officers' sleeping-huts, placed back to back, and also a number of men's sleeping huts, in the same position. There is an orderly hut, and a guard-hut, the latter provided with several cool though dismal cupboards, that are called cells, in which are confined the refractory privates who have fallen under the too tempting dissipation of Aldershott Town. There is the women's wash-hut, at which stray pedlars' carts, that are passing through the country, are observed to stand, without any visible driver, for a very long period of time; there is the family hut, for the married men, and the long canteen, facing the yellow, burning, gravelly road, where the soldier indulges in a little half-baked conviviality during the middle of the day. There is the armourers' hut, a brick edifice, with a fluted zinc roof; the shoemakers' hut: in which a number of soldiers are at work, with cobblers' shirts, and military legs; and there is the tailors' hut, where our future field-marshal is sewing on a button, or repairing a yawning rent. There is a hut that is labelled "Ablution," which is very good language for a building containing a long bench and a number of bowls, where the common soldiers go to wash. There is an officers' mess-room hut: a long, black wooden building containing many small windows adorned with crimson curtains; and there is a non-commissioned officers' mess-room hut, in which the corporals and sergeants are accustomed (when single men) to refresh their exhausted bodies. There is a cook-house hut, a fair-sized fluted zinc building, which is filled with steaming ovens, containing many shapes of beef, a roaring furnace, a number of perspiring half-military greasy cooks, presided over by a stiff corporal who orders the addition of a little salt, or the un-covering of a pannikin, as if he were leading on to glory. From the open doors of this dinner-magazine is wafted a fragrant breath of onions and cabbage: a perfume that carries you in imagination to some of the back streets of Paris on the noon of an August day.

At the back of the cook-house hut is the Quartermaster's store hut, a precisely similar fluted zinc building, that looks like a railway goods dépôt, being devoted to boxes, packages, and bags. The hospital huts are placed by themselves, being distinguished by white-painted doors. They hold about a dozen beds each; and some of the French circus-like Pierrot convalescents are lounging about them, as they were lounging about the red-bricked Elizabethan hospital in the town. These are the main features of a line of huts, at any part of the camp.

Still standing upon the hill by the General's hut, and looking across the camp, you can see to your right, towering above the huts, the shed-

like church of the South Camp, and, further on, the shed-like church of the North Camp; the white, gleaming, cup-shaped tent of the Royal Artillery, who are roughing it under canvas, and in the distance, across the common, an enclosed racket-ground, which looks like a large stone dust-bin. To the extreme left are the distant tents of the guards, brought out in pleasant relief against a green back-ground of foliage. Trees are by no means plentiful at or near Aldershot Camp, any more than grass, and very few of the hot, dusty elevations can boast of a top-knot, or a whisker of verdure.

I pursue my survey, by walking through the camp, and discover a telegraph-office hut, a fire-brigade hut, a post-office hut, and a luggage-office hut. The latter belongs to the South Eastern Railway Company, who are commencing great railway works in connexion with their line to this camp, an important, although a quiet, and, as far as the country is concerned, an inexpensive step on towards the perfection of the national defences. Close by this building is a privileged yard, conducted under military law, for the hire of Broughams, dog-carts, and the ubiquitous Hansom. There are certain camp-followers which dog the steps of the soldier, wherever he goes, from the General-in-Chief, to the lowest private in a regiment.

Towards nine o'clock in the morning the sounds of many military bands of music begin to be heard, and the shrill whistle of the fife comes from the open windows and doors of huts, as well as the more mellow tone of the clarinet. Bodies of men, in different uniforms, appear in oblong masses upon the burning stony slopes, and artillery soldiers driving heavy waggons or field trains, pass along the cross-roads from side to side. Heavy dragoons in thick, muddy, unbraced trousers, and very dirty shirts, with bronzed faces, chests, and arms, appear with pails and cans from behind the tarred huts, and disappear again. A company of bugle-youths plunge out from a side lane, followed by a little girl child, who strides widely to keep step with them. Children play about the red-hot gravel, regardless of sun-strokes, amusing themselves, in one instance, with a worn-out battered shako. Stern warriors are seen through laundry-hut windows, nursing babies amongst the baskets of clothes, or drinking tea out of large blue saucers. Other stern warriors come out attired in all the regulation glory of thick, warm, close-fitting costume, with the glass standing at one hundred degrees in the shade—even keeping to that wonderful instrument of military torture, the immortal stock. For two hundred years this ingenious, unbending variation of the old cravat has gripped the soldier by the neck, and there is no prospect, at present, of its relaxing its hold. It has many things to recommend it. When a regiment, from overwork, or an insufficiency of food, presented a sickly appearance, by obliging the men to tighten the stock as much as they could bear without suffocation, a ruddy glow was produced in the face, and every sign of a full habit of body. These instruments of cloth-

ing, before now, have been made of black horse-hair, tolerably hard, and transformed into a collar as firm as iron by the insertion of a slip of wood, which, acting on the larynx, and compressing every part of the neck, gave the eyes a wonderful prominence, and the wearer an almost supernatural appearance of healthy vigour. The present military stock is not quite as bad as this, although it is bad enough.

A squad of raw, unformed lads is marched out for drill, showing the material that the recruiting sergeant is driven together together with the Queen's shillings, in default of better youths, or men. They drop out of the ranks, even on an ordinary field-day, and on real and active service, they would die, like children, at the roadside. They have been plucked too early for the game of war, and they are as worthless as all untimely fruit.

A sombre-looking soldier is walked slowly down one of the lines, carrying a bag in one hand and a can in the other, and followed by a shabbily dressed woman, who is nursing a sleeping child. His head is bent down, and he has no remark to make, as she pours some low, ceaseless story of wrong and suffering into his ear.

By this time I thought it right that I should pay a visit of condolence to my friend, Lieutenant Hongwee, who had been compelled to pass the night in dismal communion with a whisky-bottle, at the regimental guard-house of the Royal Antrim Rifles. I looked round the apartment. Two Windsor chairs (the everlasting regulation chair all through the army), a dirty table, a fireplace, and deal shelf, were all the furniture. A bit of composite candle had burnt out and guttered down in a champagne bottle, and the shutter of the window at one end of the hut was kept open with a short rusty poker. The bare walls were ornamented with fancy cartoons, mottoes, and initials, drawn by idle, yawning heroes, with pieces of burnt wood; and the few pegs that were intended to support any superfluous outdoor military gear, were cut to pieces with sword-thrusts. The floor was blackened with accumulated dust, and the whole place, which was about ten yards long and five yards broad, looked like a good dry skittle-ground, without the skittles.

"My poor friend," I said, with compassion, looking at a tin machine that resembled a number of large shaving-pots and boxes rolled into one, "what have we here?"

"Don't allude to it," he said, with a sudden spasm, "you see my dinner-pan."

"Your what?" I asked.

"My dinner-pan," he answered. "To add to the needless torment of the wretched officer on guard, his messman—his club steward, whom he liberally pays—declines to send him his proper food. His regimental servant goes up to the mess-room, and brings down the concrete structure now before you. The bottom of the can contains the soup, a greasy broth; a box above contains potatoes and peas floating together in more greasy broth; the next step in the pyramid is another box, full of a dry and

leathery grilled beef-steak; and the apex is a metal pill-box containing pepper and salt."

The first thing we did, when the guard was properly relieved, and an unfortunate Highland ensign was imprisoned in the place of Lieutenant Hongwee, was to visit Truefitt's. Truefitt's is a living example of how a good fight may be won by combination, courage, and determination. Who would care to live without his "toilet club?" The great barber has got his hut—his little oasis of luxury—firmly planted in the desert, under the constant patronage of military men, far more than the constant regulation of military law. Faithful camp-follower—true and reliable as the Hansom cabman, he is found, in the hour of danger, at his post. What would the regulators of the British Army do without such a comforting retreat?

Why are private soldiers warned off from this agreeable lounge by a notice outside the door which says, "For officers only?" The private soldier is not in the habit of having his hair worried with strange and varied brushes, nor of having it pacified afterwards with alchemical ointments. The private soldier is not in the habit of paying half-a-crown to have his hair clipped at the back, washed with egg-flip, watered with a watering-can, his beard shaved, and his pocket-handkerchief scented with the latest perfume known. Perhaps it was thought that private soldiers sometimes come in for legacies, and go in for the genteel thing, vastly, and the notice was meant to provide against such a contingency. Many officers would have to be excluded, too, if they had no property, and were compelled to live on their pay. Five shillings a-day for an ensign, and six shillings for a lieutenant, will not go far in mess-dinners and tailors' bills, much less in toilet clubs.

Passing out of this fragrant warehouse in the desert, on our way to visit one of the encampments, we came upon half a dozen artillerymen, who were undergoing the punishment of "pack-drill." They were the drunken prisoners of last night, who, after being tried before their superior officers in the orderly room, were condemned for a certain time to walk the day in the full heat of the sun, in their heaviest marching clothes, and with their full marching "kit" upon their backs. They had now been walking up and down for some time, and their legs seemed to give way in their heavy jack-boots.

Going across the black lines of huts, our ears were suddenly saluted with a terrific outburst of military melody, and looking in one of the quartermasters' store-rooms, we found about thirty men and boys of all sizes, furnished with sax-horns of curious shape, and ophicleides as large as pumps, blowing up the roof with a popular quick-step march. The conductor, with the most vigorous action, was endeavouring to keep them in order, as they stood amongst the boxes and packages of their temporary practising-room. One short-necked, full-blooded performer, whose back was towards me, caused his neck to contract and expand in such an extreme manner, while supplying his unwieldy instru-

ment with air, that I expected every moment to see him burst, and his head drop out of sight into his opened body. I never saw anything like it, except the left cheek of an old trumpeter, which from long use, and from being nothing but thin skin, used to sink into a hole when his instrument was at rest, and blow out in an almost transparent bladder when he began to play.

Leaving this close-packed hall of harmony, we made our way to the theatre, a building that stood fairly in our road to the canvas quarters of the artillery. A wooden hut, with several entrances, looking like a travelling show that has squatted upon common land; an audience portion, capable of seating about a hundred persons; an orchestra, like a large tank; a stage such as is generally run up during a violent private theatrical fever in a back drawing-room; and a property-room, in which the hollow mockeries of the drama are combined with the solid realities of a habitation and a laundry, comprise nearly all that need be described of the well-known Theatre Royal, South Camp, Aldersholt. It was manned, during the day, by one male attendant, who managed it as if it had been a ship, hauling up the scenes like sails, and putting it in trim working-order for the performance of the evening.

A quarter of an hour's walk brought us, at last, to the Royal Artillery encampment. There was a large square enclosure full of horses, like a horse fair, railed in with ropes and stakes, and surrounded by an irregular line of tents. A man in military trousers and a dirty shirt—the amateur blacksmith of the regiment—was hammering out a horse-shoe upon an anvil, which stood full and unprotected on the sand, under the noon-day sun. Not far from this workman was a camp fire, over which was cooking the dinner of the men. A couple of narrow ditches, first cut in the earth in the form of an equal cross, and then filled full of wood, furze, or any dry rubbish about, that will burn; a covering of sheet iron strips placed over these ditches; a peat chimney built in the centre, for the purpose of drawing the fire below; the wood or furze set alight, and the kettles, like pails, placed along the iron plates on the side where they are most likely to avoid the smoke and boil the quickest; and the rough and ready camp oven is complete. When the lids of the pail-kettles are lifted up, bushels of potatoes, spungy masses of cabbage, and irregular blocks of heavy pudding, like lumps of clay, are boiling and bubbling away; and one glance of the glaring mid-day sun seems to stir up the broth as much as the hidden, choking fire below.

"That is the elegant kind of pic-nic," said Lieutenant Hongwee, "which we are often required to assist at: with this difference, that we are marched twenty miles away to some solitary spot, kept out for several days and several nights under canvas, and made to kill our own meat before we eat it, or feed upon blackberries, like the Children in the Wood."

I saw that this was a tender subject, and I made no reply, but contented myself with observing the other features of the camp.

Most of the men were having a short rest under the tents, being disposed of in the same manner as they sleep at night. About a dozen were lying together on straw, with their heads resting on their great-coats at the lower circumference of the tent, and their feet meeting together at the pole in the centre, like the spokes of a wheel. At a given word of command, they all started up, and went to work with their horses, looking more like dirty gipsy ostlers than the clean and elipt soldier who parades the London streets.

The tent of a sub-officer, to which we were invited, was not remarkable for any luxury, except the luxury of being a lodging for one. The sand at the bottom was covered over with a layer of green leaves, and a sprinkling of straw; the occupant's soap, and towel, and brush were lying on the top of a tin box; his small looking-glass was on the ground, leaning against the side of the tent; he had made a reclining couch of one portmanteau, a money-box to hold loose silver of another, and he had still another huge, black, drum-like box to offer a friend. He was quite a gipsy king, in his tent.

As we sat looking out of the mouth of the tent across the Artillery encampment, and past the lower end of the North Camp, we could see a thin winding line of scarlet, that looked like a row of poppies in a field. There were a few black patches (the blue Artillerymen and the green Riflemen) studded about the sandy flat of common, with here and there a few white stragglers, probably the Stirlingshire militia, or some Foot Guardsmen in flannel undress jackets; but the scarlet patches prevailed in that direction; and, looking further, we saw the white peaks of another range of tents.

"The Guards are as badly off there as you are here," said Lieutenant Hongwee, alluding to the scarlet patch and the distant tents, and addressing the gipsy king.

"Worse," returned the gipsy king, "infinitely worse. We only came from quarters at Woolwich at the dull time of the year; but those poor fellows have just been sent down from London in the height of the season, to be placed under canvas at once. Canvas is a capital thing properly applied—when it means a dancing tent on a lawn at Fulham—but canvas at Aldershot is a far less agreeable affair."

We sauntered slowly towards the Rifle mess-room for breakfast; Lieutenant Hongwee rather despondingly, and I rather disposed to condole with my friend and companion.

The mess-room was a long, airy building, very lofty for the camp, with a small ante-room in front, and having the mysteries of the cooking department concealed by a chocolate-coloured cloth curtain stretching right across the apartment near the back. The long dining-table and sideboard were well covered with food, and the chairs were the everlasting Windsor regimental kitchen. To give a dining-room aspect to

these rough companions, they were covered with a padded leather seat and back: a contrivance which each officer provides himself, and carries about with him from one station to another.

"Is this a fair specimen of your ordinary day?" I inquired, as we proceeded with our morning repast.

"It is: with the exception of a few field-days, and our penal servitude under canvas. We rise about ten A.M.; we show upon parade for about an hour; and after twelve, until the bugle sounds to dress for mess, at seven, we have no settled occupation whatever."

"There is a club-house built in the South Camp, is there not?"

"There is, but with a lofty rate of subscription, almost prohibiting the entrance of poor subalterns. When there, you can only read, play at billiards, or talk. Most men, like myself, who get five or six shillings a day, spend twice as much as they earn, and that without indulging in any particular extravagance. As most things are done by mutual and equal subscription, the pressure of the service outlay falls heaviest upon the junior members. The major, or colonel, who sits opposite to me at dinner, pays no more to the mess fund than I do."

"You have field sports for your amusement, which need not cost anything."

"No one cares for them. A few men use the racket-ground; but very few. Rowing up the canal is a favourite recreation; to drink beer at a public-house, where they profess to keep an 'officers' room,' and then to row back again. The common soldier is better off than we are, for he has his town and his concert-rooms; but we can do nothing except wait wearily for the welcome summons to mess."

My vehicle, on its road to the North Camp railway station, rolled me past trucks of camp furniture, past cabs containing field officers, past solitary scarlet soldiers who stood like lonely poppies in the meadows, past other scarlet soldiers who wound slowly along the drab and dusty lanes, and past a group of boy children in green uniform, coming through a hedge, who looked as if the very cradles of the country had been emptied for their contents to be pressed into the ranks. I broke through another crowd of soldiers at the station, and plunged into my carriage, glad to be whirled away.

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